GEORGE FOX

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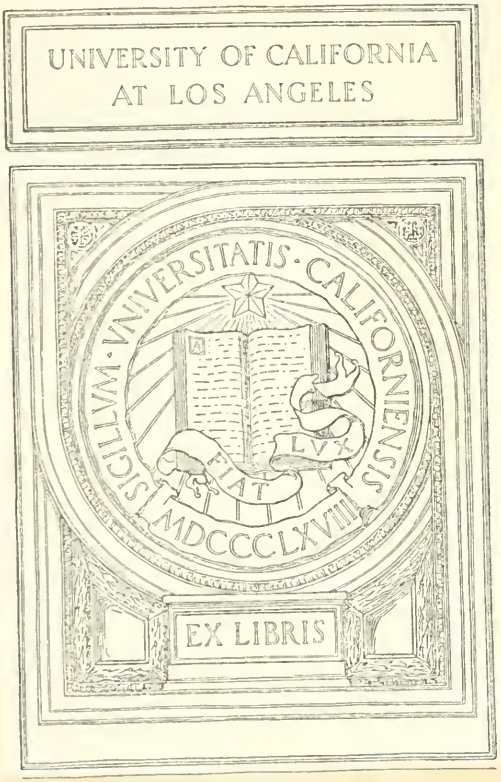

Leaders of Religion

Edited by H. C. Beeching, M.A.

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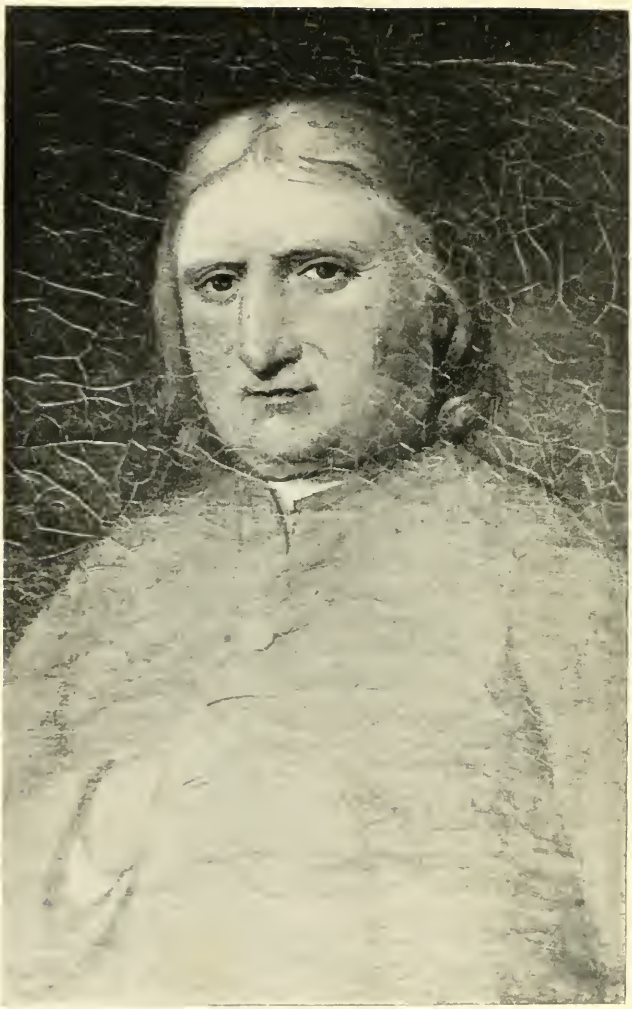

GEORGE FOX

From the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely, in the possession of the Trustees of Swarthmore College

GEORGE FOX

BY

THOMAS HODGKIN, D.C.L.

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THOMAS HODGKIN

AUTHOR OF "THEODORIC"

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PREFACE

HAVING been asked by my friend, the Editor of this series, to write the life of George Fox, I have completed the work to the best of my ability, though I am aware of the disadvantage under which I labour in not having for some years made that period a subject of special study.

The reader will no doubt perceive that I am myself a member of the Society of Friends, to which my ancestors have belonged since its first foundation by George Fox; but I trust that this fact has not caused me to swerve from that absolute fidelity of portraiture which ought to be the aim of every biographer. There are some lines in the portrait which, out of love to Fox's memory, I would gladly have omitted; but loyalty to "the Truth," which has ever been the watchword of the Society of Friends, forbade me to do so. Only I may repeat a remark which has been often made, that his faults (especially his polemic bitterness) were, for the most part, faults characteristic of his age, while his nobler qualities, his courage, his conscientiousness, and his intense love of truth, were emphatically his own.

There is an interesting question, into which I have

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not had space to enter, how far Fox's system was peculiar to himself, and how far it was borrowed from other sects, especially the Baptists and Mennonites. My own impression is that Fox was essentially an original religious thinker, and that few men have ever had less of the Eclectic character than he: but for a careful statement of the other side of the question I may refer my readers to a book frequently quoted in the following pages, Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth.*

It only remains to express my thanks to the following gentlemen, who have helped me in various ways in the composition of this little book—Prof. Gardiner, Mr. C. J. Spence (the possessor of the original MS. of George Fox's *Journal*), Messrs Jno. Fell, J. S. Rowntree, and Alexr. Gordon. It will be seen that I am under many obligations to Mrs. Webb's *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, which contains several letters of the Fell family and of George Fox not elsewhere published. But, beyond all other books, I have been helped by Prof. Masson's *Life of Milton*, the most valuable work, as it seems to me, which has been written, not only on the literary but also on the religious history of England during the central years of the seventeenth century.

THOS. HODGKIN.

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GEORGE FOX

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"George Fox, the founder of Quakerism." That is the formula which expresses, and will probably always express, Fox's place in religious history. Yet of him, even more emphatically than of the men who have given their names to great sections of the Christian Church, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley, it may be confidently affirmed that to found a new sect was the furthest thing from his hopes and aspirations. A religious reformer, at any rate one who desires to work in harmony with the spirit of Christianity, cannot have sectarian aims. He cannot be satisfied with conquering one little province of the Christian world, and labelling it with his own name. He must believe that he is the bearer of a world-wide message, adapted to all sorts and conditions of men, and that for the whole Christian Church the only hope of health and cleansing lies in the acceptance of that message. Such was most emphatically the belief of George Fox,

and accordingly in studying his life it is necessary as much as possible to dissever him in thought from the quiet, respectable, unaggressive sect of which he was in fact, though not in intention, the founder.

But a man who believes, as Fox believed, that he has a Divine commission to testify against the errors and corruptions of the religion which is professed by those around him, will be the last man to do justice to the germs of a holier and better life underlying every corruption. He will have little or nothing of that sympathetic, eclectic spirit which is perhaps the best quality in the religious life of our generation, and which enables us to deal fairly with schools of thought to which intellectually we are utterly opposed. A man of such intense convictions as dominated the soul of the first Quaker is almost of necessity narrow, and very narrow the reader will probably consider some of George Fox's judgments.

Yet if we would understand this man's life in even the least degree, if we are to look upon him as anything more than a wrong-headed and troublesome disturber of the public peace,—that is to say, if we would learn anything of the results produced by his preaching, and the secret of his power,—we must be willing, at least for a time, to place ourselves at his point of view, and look forth upon the Christian world as he, knowing scarce any other book than the English Bible, and imbued with the spirit of a Hosea or a Jeremiah, looked forth upon it.

It is difficult for us Englishmen of the nineteenth century to throw ourselves back into the state of feeling as to all religious matters which prevailed among our forefathers at the time of the Civil War. We have

been always accustomed to the sight of many religious denominations existing side by side, if not in love, at any rate in peace. Round the great Established Church of England revolve in their own orbits the Nonconformist Churches of Protestantism, while the old historic Church of Rome has perfect freedom to worship as she pleases, and to make proselytes as she can. How utterly different was the state of things under Elizabeth and James I.; yes, and even when Charles I. had been vanquished, and Puritanism had gained the upper hand! The popish "Recusants" were persecuted with a ferocity which is the disgrace of Protestantism, and which is only explained, not justified, by the cruelties which had marked the victorious march of the Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands and Germany, and by the disloyal and even murderous projects of which some of the English Papists were guilty.

Within the Protestant camp, from the beginning of Charles's reign, Episcopalian and Presbyterian were contending, not for bare existence, not even for priority of place and possession of old revenues, but for the right absolutely to suppress the defeated party. Not Laud himself was more intolerant of the "Calvinian" lecturers than the adherents of the Solemn League and Covenant were intolerant of every other form even of Puritan discipline which squared not with their precise notions of Presbyterian orthodoxy. In the minds of some of the Independents, it is true, the great principle of religious toleration had taken root, and had begun to show itself above ground. Great leaders of the sect, such as Roger Williams in America and Cromwell in England, were sacrificing much of their popularity in the attempt to persuade the bigots around them to

bear with other usages than their own; but entire and absolute religious toleration was still, in the middle of the seventeenth century, a theory and a dream, as much as is the reunion of all Christians in one Church at the close of the nineteenth century.

In the years of Fox's childhood and boyhood the Episcopal Church of England was ruling England with absolute sway, and Archbishop Laud was everywhere removing the altars to the eastern end of the churches, insisting on the kneeling posture of communicants, and on the worshippers bowing at the name of Jesus. Ere Fox had completed his seventeenth year, the system of "Thorough" in Church and State had broken down. Strafford's head had fallen on Tower Hill, Laud was in prison, and the immense latent strength of Puritanism was about to manifest itself both on the battle-field and in the Houses of Parliament. It is important to remember this fact. In the really formative years of Fox's religious development, not Episcopacy, but Presbyterianism was the dominant form of Church government. Calvin's *Institutes*, not Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, was the text-book of the clergy with whom he was brought in contact. It was not high sacramental teaching, nor discourses on Apostolical Succession, from which this young man's soul revolted, but it was the long sermons (reaching to eighteenthly and nineteenthly) on abstruse points of doctrine, the almost equally long and sermon-like prayers, the Calvinistic teaching of the predestined and eternal misery of a large portion of the human race, the superstitious reverence for every letter in that collection of writings by holy men of old made by the Jewish and Christian Churches, to which was given the name of "the Word of God"; the determina-

tion to keep the Lord's Day as if it had been a Jewish Sabbath, fencing it round with the same awful sanctions with which that day was encompassed in the legislation of the Pentateuch: these and similar exaggerations of what was then called the Puritan, and has since been called the Evangelical, school, were what first called forth the impassioned protest of the young shepherd of Leicestershire.

In 1660, when Fox had fully reached middle life, and had been for twelve years a zealous missionary preacher, came the restoration of kingship in England, and the downfall of Puritan ascendency. Too soon after this great event, which it was hoped would introduce an era of religious peace and mutual toleration, came that cruel and vindictive persecution of Nonconformity in the name of a perjured and profligate king, which forms the darkest page in the history of the Church of England, one which all who are zealous for her good name would gladly obliterate from her annals. This persecution fell heavily on the followers of Fox, as on all the other Nonconformists: even more heavily on the former by reason of their stern and unbending disposition, than on the latter. The utter failure of the Episcopalians, though armed with the whole power of the State, to suppress or even to diminish the numbers of these dauntless dissenters from the Established Church, was undoubtedly a powerful factor in convincing the nation of the necessity of that general toleration which was the best result of the Revolution of 1688. But though during this quarter of a century Episcopalian parsons and squires were the chief agents in the persecution of Fox and his friends, it can hardly be said that even then they were the chief objects of his religious

polemics. Still the Calvinistic teaching was that against which he bore his most persistent protest, and when his young disciple Barclay gave literary and logical form to the new sect's teaching, his *Apology* was a veiled attack upon the *Westminster Confession*, the great manifesto of seventeenth-century Calvinism.[1] From this statement it must not be inferred that there was any leaning in the mind of Fox and his friends towards what is called Catholic teaching, whether Anglican or Roman. All that was distinctively characteristic of mediæval Christianity was condemned by them as belonging to "the dark night of apostacy," and the attempts of the disciples of Laud to re-establish the Anglican Church on a basis which should be Catholic, but not Roman, were not indeed actively opposed, because they were never understood by the early Quakers, bred up as these men had been in a universally diffused atmosphere of Puritanism.

Lastly, there is one characteristic of early Quakerism which must in fairness be noted, and which it shared with every other religious party of the time. This is the extreme bitterness with which they spoke of their opponents, the absolute certainty which they felt that they alone were in the right, and that all who differed from them went wilfully astray. To most of the first generation of Quakers, as to his Presbyterian opponents, might Cromwell have addressed his well-known appeal, "I beseech you, by the mercies of Jesus Christ, think it

[1] This relation of Barclay's *Apology* to the *Westminster Confession* and the *Shorter Catechism* has not hitherto attracted sufficient attention. Whoever compares the order of Barclay's Propositions with that of the questions in the *Shorter Catechism*, will, I think, have no doubt that the former document intentionally follows the latter.

possible that you may be mistaken." In this, as I have said, they shared that "form and pressure of the times" from which the most original thinkers cannot expect wholly to escape. With us, it may be, the danger is of an opposite kind. New horizons of thought have been opened out to us. The universe presents itself to our minds as an infinitely greater and more wonderful thing than it was supposed to be by those eager combatants of the seventeenth century. We are no longer so absolutely sure that our little plummets have sounded its awful depths, that we have mapped out all its vastness. Hence comes doubt; hence, it may be, sometimes too languid a grasp of the truths which have been revealed to us. But hence also comes mutual tolerance, and a willingness to acknowledge that others who walk not exactly in our paths may have their faces set towards the Heavenly City; and that is in itself a gain, perhaps a gain which even outweighs the loss that has made it possible.

CHAPTER II

BIRTHPLACE

THE little hamlet of Drayton-in-the-Clay (as George Fox styles it in his *Journal*), or Fenny Drayton, as it is now called by the inhabitants, might in the seventeenth century have been fitly described by either name. It is situated on the western verge of Leicestershire, on a clay level, with the rising ground of Market Bosworth on the east, and the pleasant hills of Atherstone on the west. The road which leads to it from Bosworth is still called Fen Lane, and though the country is now well drained, it is easy to see how two hundred years ago the desolate waters of the Fens must have lain, all the winter through, round about the little hamlet.

Fenny Drayton lies about two miles to the east of the main line of the London and North-Western Railway between London and Liverpool. The Watling Street, of which the modern railway here, as so often elsewhere, is the faithful companion, and which forms the modern boundary between the counties of Leicester and Warwick, comes yet nearer, within a mile of Fenny Drayton, and the little village of Mancetter hard by represents a station which is named

in the road-book of the Roman Empire.[1] This is not a mere matter of antiquarian interest, for in the seventeenth century the Roman roads were still the chief available highways of the country. Along the Watling Street doubtless passed in Fox's day the waggons which carried the wool of the north of England up to the markets of London. By the same route may have ridden both Cavaliers and Roundheads towards the battle-field of Marston Moor, and it was along the same road undoubtedly that Henry of Richmond, a century and a half before the time of Fox's boyhood, came to pluck the crown of England from the head of Richard III. The rising ground of Market Bosworth, as has been already said, is all but within sight of Drayton, and George Fox, in his lonely wanderings over the fields which surrounded his birthplace, must have often passed the site of Henry's camp, perhaps may have drunk sometimes at the well at which Richard is said to have quenched his thirst ere he rushed into the battle.[2]

At the present day but little is left to show what Drayton-in-the-Clay looked like two hundred years ago. Uninteresting modern buildings, with shallow windows and slated roofs, have replaced the picturesque, deep-mullioned Jacobean houses, with their thatches of straw, which George Fox must have looked on as a boy.

[1] Manduesedum, mentioned in the Antonine *Itinerary*.

[2] A more modern set of associations, but one which will interest some readers, is connected with a recent novelist. The visitor to Fenny Drayton finds himself in the heart of "George Eliot's country." Marian Evans was born at Nuneaton, the capital of this district; and the scenes of *Adam Bede*, *Janet's Repentance*, *Mr. Gilfil*, and *Amos Barton*, are all to be found within a few miles of George Fox's birthplace.

The house which tradition pointed out as his birthplace has long since disappeared. One antique cottage which stood near to it remained till a few years ago, and was rapidly becoming a little local sanctuary; nay, it was on the point of being transported to the other side of the Atlantic by an enterprising American speculator, and being re-erected as the home of the friend of the founder of Pennsylvania. Apparently, however, in the course of the negotiations the fictitious nature of its claims was made manifest, the proposal was withdrawn, the house tumbled down, and the last vestiges of its fabric have recently disappeared. A little obelisk of Quaker-like simplicity has been erected within a hundred yards or so of the site of the original cottage, to keep alive the memory of George Fox's birthplace.

In this utter modernization of the little hamlet, we are driven by the irony of Fate to look for our only links of connection with the past, in that building to which George Fox would only allow the name of "steeple-house," and on which he would never have expected his remotest disciples to gaze with interest.

The church of Fenny Drayton is a building chiefly in the late Decorated style, but possesses a rather peculiar Norman doorway somewhat concealed by a modern porch. It has two aisles and a chancel; and the chief objects of interest which it contains are the monuments of the Purefoy family, who were for more than three centuries the territorial aristocracy of Drayton. One of these monuments is in the northern aisle, which was apparently a kind of chapel of the Purefoys, with a private door leading out to their closely adjoining manor-house. The other, which lines the northern

wall of the chancel, and of which probably only a part is still remaining, was erected towards the end of the sixteenth century by "Jocosa" (Joyce) Purefoy, who had married her cousin Edward Purefoy of Shawleson, and conveyed to him the lordship of her father's lands. In two long and pompous inscriptions, written in Latin hexameters, the stately lady, or rather the scholar who did her bidding, celebrates the virtues of her deceased husband, and describes how he kept inviolate the "pure faith" from which his family derived their name, and the courage with which some remote ancestor had defended his lord on the field of battle with the broken spear which was ever after the family's crest. Hundreds of times during the long prelections of the minister of Drayton must the boyish eyes of Fox have wandered over these mysterious monuments. His education was too imperfect to enable him to comprehend their meaning; otherwise we might please ourselves with the thought that he had determined to take for his own the motto of the Squire's family, PURE FOY MA IOYE; and we might recall the fact that the great militant Quietist gazed so often in his boyhood on a line fancifully adapted from Horace—

"Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit arma quieti."[1]

But this, we must admit, is but a caprice of the fancy.

The Purefoys of Drayton fell into difficulties in the hard-drinking Hanoverian times, and the representative of the family towards the middle of the eighteenth century obtained a private Act of Parliament enabling him to alienate his estate. Only the funereal monuments now remain to attest the family's former great-

[1] "He gains all hearts who blendeth war with rest."

ness. The stately manor-house has vanished from the earth, its site only marked by a slight inequality which shows where the moat once guarded the house.

Altogether Fenny Drayton somewhat depresses the visitor by the conviction which it forces upon him of the obliterating power of only two centuries of time. One great natural landmark remains in the quadrangular belt of solemn yew-trees which still surrounds the parish church, and which probably look very much as they did when Jocosa Purefoy reared her monument.

> "O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
> Who changest not in any gale,
> Nor branding summer suns avail
> To touch thy thousand years of gloom."

Even more than the squire, the parson of the parish must have exercised a powerful influence on the boyhood of the future reformer. The living was in the squire's gift, and George Purefoy, "Jocosa's" son, presented to it[1] (probably somewhere about 1640) the Reverend Nathaniel Stephens, M.A., who held it till the year 1662. From the fact that Stephens belonged to the Puritan party in the Church, we may probably infer that his patron was of the same way of thinking, and this conjecture is confirmed by our finding that his cousin, William Purefoy of Caldecote, was a General in the Parliamentary army, and a diligent member of the Court by which Charles I. was sentenced to death. Nathaniel Stephens was the son of a Wiltshire clergyman, was born in 1606, and received his education as

[1] Wood's statement that Stephens was intruded into the living in 1643 in place of an ejected Episcopalian, is shown by Calamy to be erroneous.

a "batler" at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. He seems to have been a fair specimen of the Presbyterian divines who came to the front during the ascendency of the Long Parliament. A staunch defender of the right of the clergy to tithes, and of the practice of infant baptism, he fought long paper battles with the Independents and Baptists on these questions. On the other hand, he was great in Apocalyptic literature, composing a *Plain and Easy Calculation of the Name, Mark, and Number of the Beast*, and was a thorough Calvinist in his teaching as to the utter depravity of man, and in his defence of the doctrine of Election and Reprobation by God's absolute decree. Any one who takes the trouble to glance through his *Vindiciæ Fundamenti, or Threefold Defence of the Doctrine of Original Sin*, with its wearisome speculations as to Adam's state before and after the fall, will easily understand how little help a tired soul seeking for rest, and longing to hear the voice of the Living God, would derive from this self-satisfied scholastic divine. Thus we shall find that "Priest Stephens" is spoken of with little gratitude in George Fox's *Journal*, and as this is practically the only rock which raises him ever so little out of the waters of oblivion, he has received from posterity somewhat harder measure than he deserves. It is clear, indeed, that he failed to understand the nature of "the questings and the guessings" of his strange young parishioner; but there is small blame to him, trained as he had been, for such a failure; and after all, the fact that he went forth from his pleasant rectory on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1662, to spend the remaining fifteen years of his life in obscurity as a Nonconformist preacher at Stoke Golding, shows that

he was a true man, and willing to suffer for conscience' sake.

After this brief sketch of George Fox's birthplace we may proceed to the story of his early years. Our chief authority here and everywhere must be his own *Journal*, but as that book reaches to a thousand octavo pages, it is obvious that only a few of its more striking passages can be laid under contribution.

CHAPTER III

EARLY LIFE

George Fox was born in July 1624.[1] His parents were persons in a humble station, but apparently not in actual poverty, and they probably belonged to the numerous class which conformed to the worship of the national Church, while sympathizing with what was beginning to be known as Puritanism. His own account of them is as follows:—

"My father's name was Christopher Fox: he was by profession a weaver, an honest man; and there was a seed of God in him. The neighbours called him Righteous Christer. My mother was an upright woman; her maiden name was Mary Lago, of the family of the Lagos, and of the stock of the martyrs."

William Penn's statement is that "he was born of honest and sufficient parents, who endeavoured to bring him up, as they did the rest of their children, in the way and worship of the nation: especially his

[1] Fox does not seem to have known the exact day of his birth, and unfortunately the blank cannot be filled up from the parish registers, which have suffered denudation at the hands of a sexton's wife in the last century, requiring paper for her jam-pots. The present Rector of Fenny Drayton tells me, however, that he has found the register of the baptism of George Fox's sister Mary.

mother, who was a woman accomplished above most of her degree in the place where she lived."

As to the time of Fox's birth, we note in passing that it was in the year before the death of King James I. The old king, who was in failing health, had practically abandoned the direction of affairs to the Prince of Wales and his brilliant, unstable friend the Duke of Buckingham, who had just returned from that foolish piece of knight-errantry, the journey to Spain. When Fox was born, negotiations were proceeding for Prince Charles's marriage to the daughter of Henry IV. of France, that marriage which was one of the links in the chain of events which drew on the Civil War and the bloody tragedy of Whitehall.

However little a man may be affected by the acts and thoughts of his contemporaries, it is always interesting to observe who those contemporaries were. In the year before Fox's birth, Blaise Pascal began his frail but wonderful life. John Dryden (born 1631) and John Locke (1632) were his juniors by seven and eight years respectively; and his birth-year placed him nearly at the middle point between John Milton (1608) and Sir Isaac Newton (1642).

Yet, as has been already hinted, the future Quaker apostle dwelt mostly in a sphere apart, very little influenced by the thoughts, philosophical, poetical, or political, of the men of his stirring generation. The Bible seems to have been his only literature, and it may safely be said that Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, who was separated from him by an interval of twenty-four centuries, had infinitely more influence on his mind than William Shakespeare, who died but eight years before he came into the world.

So, too, for the political events of his time. While he was passing through his childhood and boyhood, the terrible Thirty Years' War was draining the life-blood of Germany; and Laud and Strafford by their policy of Thorough were gradually alienating the hearts of Englishmen from their king, and preparing them to open "the purple testament of bleeding war." The Civil War began when Fox was in the eighteenth year of his age, and lasted till about the time when he began his missionary journeys. Yet to all these events he makes no allusion, and it may be doubted whether even at the time they greatly moved him. The history of his own soul, his struggles with the power of darkness, his reachings forth after the light and peace of God, seem to have absorbed all his thoughts, and the thunderstorms of war and revolution crashed round him unheeded.

The childhood and youth of George Fox are thus described by William Penn:—

"But from a child he appeared of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren: being more religious, inward, still, solid and observing beyond his years, as the answers he would give, and the questions he would put upon occasion, manifested to the astonishment of those that heard him, especially in divine things.

"His mother taking notice of his singular temper, and the gravity, wisdom, and piety that very early shined through him, refusing childish and vain sports and company when very young, she was tender and indulgent over him, so that from her he met with little difficulty. As to his employment, he was brought up in country business; and as he took most delight in sheep, so he was very skilful in them; an employment

that very well suited his mind in several respects, both from its innocency and solitude; and was a just figure of his after ministry and service."

His own account of this period of his life is given in these words:—

"In my very young years I had a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children; insomuch that when I saw old men carry themselves lightly and wantonly towards each other, I had a dislike thereof raised in my heart, and said within myself, 'If ever I come to be a man, surely I shall not do so, nor be so wanton.'

"When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness; for while I was a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure. The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully two ways, viz. inwardly to God, and outwardly to man; and to keep to Yea and Nay in all things. For the Lord showed me, that though the people of the world have mouths full of deceit, and changeable words, yet I was to keep to Yea and Nay in all things; and that my words should be few and savoury, seasoned with grace; and that I might not eat and drink to make myself wanton, but for health, using the creatures in their service, as servants in their places, to the glory of Him that hath created them; they being in their covenant, and I being brought into the covenant, and sanctified by the Word which was in the beginning by which all things are upheld; wherein is unity with the creation.

"But people being strangers to the covenant of life with God, they eat and drink to make themselves wanton with the creatures, wasting them upon their own lusts, and living in all filthiness, loving foul ways,

and devouring the creation; and all this in the world, in the pollutions thereof, without God; therefore I was to shun all such.

"Afterwards, as I grew up, my relations thought to make me a priest, but others persuaded to the contrary: whereupon I was put to a man that was a shoemaker by trade, and that dealt in wool, and used grazing, and sold cattle; and a great deal went through my hands. While I was with him, he was blessed; but after I left him he broke, and came to nothing. I never wronged man or woman in all that time; for the Lord's power was with me, and over me to preserve me. While I was in that service, I used in my dealings the word Verily, and it was a common saying among the people that knew me, 'If George says Verily, there is no altering him.' When boys and rude people would laugh at me, I let them alone, and went my way; but people had generally a love to me for my innocency and honesty."

Fox's autobiography constantly reminds us of the experiences of his contemporary John Bunyan, whether as described in *Grace Abounding*, or as allegorized in *Pilgrim's Progress;* and yet the relation between them is more often one of contrast than of similarity. Thus here his spiritual life does not begin with that intense self-loathing, that agony in the thought of unforgiven sin, which is the keynote of Bunyan's early experience. Fox does not feel that he is born in the City of Destruction, nor does he begin his journey with a heavy burden on his back which will roll off at the sight of the Cross; yet all the same he is a pilgrim, and a very ardent one, and he will have as little sympathy with Vanity Fair, and will suffer as much

for his testimony against its wickedness as Bunyan's Christian himself. "When I came towards nineteen years of age," he continues, "being upon business at a fair, one of my cousins, whose name was Bradford, a professor,[1] and having another professor with him, came to me, and asked me to drink part of a jug of beer with them; and I being thirsty, went in with them, for I loved any that had a sense of good, or that did seek after the Lord. When we had drunk a glass apiece, they began to drink healths, and called for more drink, agreeing together that he that would not drink should pay all. I was grieved that any that made profession of religion should do so. They grieved me very much, having never had such a thing put to me before by any sort of people, wherefore I rose up to go, and putting my hand into my pocket I took out a groat, and laid it upon the table before them, and said, 'If it be so, I will leave you.' So I went away, and when I had done what business I had to do, I returned home, but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down, and sometimes prayed and cried to the Lord, who said unto me, 'Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be a stranger unto all.'"

Though not struggling under the burden of unforgiven sin, Fox, in these years of dawning manhood, was made miserable by the thought of the evil of the world around him. Perhaps, notwithstanding the absence of all allusion to political events, the miseries and distractions

[1] This word "professor," which is of frequent occurrence in Fox's *Journal*, may be taken as practically equivalent to Puritan.

of the great Civil War struck their own harshly jarring note on the Divine harmony for which he longed. At this, as well as some later periods of his career, his words remind us of the utterances of a man of whom he probably never heard—Girolamo Savonarola. At the age of nineteen Savonarola was seeking solitude, was composing his poem on the Ruin of the World, had ever on his lips the Virgilian line—

"Heu! fuge crudeles terras, fuge littus avarum;"

and three years later his depression and despair drove him into the cloister, his treatise *De Contemptu Mundi* being the only legacy left to comfort his sorrowing father for the wreck of the ambitious hopes which had gathered round this favourite son.

To Fox the shelter of the convent was of course not accessible, but he broke off his intercourse with his family as completely as if he had turned monk. His narrative proceeds—"Then at the command of God, on the ninth day of the seventh month 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with old or young." For the next three or four years he seems to have led a wandering life, moving about through the home counties, but spending several months at Barnet, and afterwards in London. At Barnet, when he was walking solitary in Enfield Chace, the temptation to despair came over him. He thought that his fear of desertion by God might be a judgment upon him for leaving his relations, but he was comforted in the thought that even Christ was also tempted. The "great professors" of London could not help him, nor yet could an uncle of his who belonged to the Baptist community, though, as he says, "they were tender then." He returned into

Leicestershire, and his relations, fearing probably for his reason, urged him to marry, "but I told them I was but a lad and must get wisdom. Others would have had me into the auxiliary band among the soldiery" (we have now reached 1645, the year of the battle of Naseby), "but I refused: and I was grieved that they proffered such things to me being a tender youth. Then I went to Coventry, where I took a chamber for a while at a professor's house, till people began to be acquainted with me; for there were many tender people in that town." We are already making acquaintance with this word "tender," which is a favourite expression of Fox's throughout the *Journal*, denoting, not delicacy of the physical frame, for he and his disciples endured hardships which might break down the strongest constitution, but delicacy of spiritual perception, unwillingness to be satisfied with the polemical theology of the ordinary Puritan—a desire to get into communion with the Spirit of the Eternal One, and to learn His will. He returned to his native village, and now at length, if not before, had some converse with the parson of his parish, and with some of the neighbouring divines about the state of his soul. To quote again from the *Journal:*

"The priest of Drayton, the town of my birth, whose name was Nathaniel Stevens (*sic*), came often to me, and I went often to him; and another priest sometimes came with him; and they would give place to me to hear me, and I would ask them questions, and reason with them. And this priest Stevens asked me a question, viz. Why Christ cried out upon the cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? and why He said, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done'? I

told him that at that time the sins of all mankind were upon Him, and their iniquities and transgressions with which He was wounded, which He was to bear, and to be an offering for, as He was man, but He died not, as He was God: and so, in that He died for all men, and tasted death for every man, He was an offering for the sins of the whole world. This I spoke, being at that time in a measure sensible of Christ's sufferings and what He went through. And the priest said, 'It was a very good, full answer, and such a one as he had not heard.' At that time he would applaud and speak highly of me to others; and what I said in discourse to him on the week-days, that he would preach on the first-days, for which I did not like him. This priest afterwards became my great persecutor.

"After this I went to another ancient priest at Mancetter in Warwickshire, and reasoned with him about the ground of despair and temptations; but he was ignorant of my condition: he bid me take tobacco and sing psalms. Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing; I could not sing. Then he bid me come again, and he would tell me many things: but when I came he was angry and pettish, for my former words had displeased him. He told my troubles, sorrows, and griefs to his servants, so that it was got among the milk-lasses; which grieved me that I should open my mind to such a one. I saw they were all miserable comforters, and this brought my troubles more upon me. Then I heard of a priest living about Tamworth, who was accounted an experienced man, and I went seven miles to him; but I found him only like an empty, hollow cask. I heard also of one called Dr. Cradock, of

Coventry, and went to him; I asked him the ground of temptations and despair, and how troubles came to be wrought in man? He asked me, Who was Christ's father and mother? I told him, Mary was His mother, and that He was supposed to be the son of Joseph, but He was the son of God. Now as we were walking together in his garden, the alley being narrow, I chanced, in turning, to set my foot on the side of a bed, at which the man was in a rage as if his house had been on fire. Thus all our discourse was lost, and I went away in sorrow, worse than I was when I came. I thought them miserable comforters, and saw they were all as nothing to me; for they could not reach my condition. After this I went to another, one Macham, a priest in high account.[1] He would needs give me some physic, and I was to have been let blood; but they could not get one drop of blood from me, either in arms or head (though they endeavoured

[1] "This Macham, a priest in high account," seems to have been a man of George Fox's own age—John Machin (1624—1664), of whom there is a long account in Calamy's *Ejected Ministers*. He was born in 1624, educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and ordained in 1644. He came to Atherstone as lecturer in 1652. We should be naturally disposed to connect the entry in the *Journal* with this part of Machin's career, as Atherstone is only a few miles from Fenny Drayton; but if so it must be mentioned by Fox out of its chronological order. Machin went from Atherstone into Cheshire in 1654. At the Restoration he held the living of Whitley in that county, and was ejected from it on St. Bartholomew's Day. "And hardly any one bore his ejectment with less reflection upon superiors, or with more grief for so sad a dispensation. The neighbouring gentry, convinced of his integrity, and the peaceableness of his spirit, gave him no molestation. Several of his old neighbours going to see him, he dropped the words, 'Ah! my friends! I never lived since I died.' His death happening soon after, viz. September 6, 1664, made them conclude that being silenced broke his heart. He was not above forty years of age."

it), my body being, as it were, dried up with sorrows, grief, and troubles, which were so great upon me that I could have wished I had never been born, or that I had been born blind, that I might never have seen wickedness or vanity; and deaf, that I might never have heard vain and wicked words, or the Lord's name blasphemed. When the time called Christmas came, while others were feasting and sporting themselves, I looked out poor widows from house to house, and gave them some money. When I was invited to marriages (as I sometimes was), I went to none at all, but the next day, or soon after, I would go and visit them; and if they were poor, I gave them some money; for I had wherewith both to keep myself from being chargeable to others, and to administer something to the necessities of others."

In the year 1646 the spiritual conflict grows lighter, and he seems to have a clearer perception of a distinct Divine call to his own soul, making him independent of such helpers as "priest Stevens" or Dr. Cradock. He has, as he terms it, "great openings."

"As I was walking in a field on a first day [Sunday] morning, the Lord opened unto me, that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit or qualify men to be ministers of Christ, and I wondered at it, because it was the common belief of people. But I saw it clearly as the Lord opened it to me, and was satisfied, and admired the goodness of the Lord, who had opened this thing unto me that morning." He feels that this strikes at "priest Stevens's" ministry, and to the great trouble of his relations he will no longer go with them to hear the priest, but wanders through the fields or the orchard alone with his Bible.

At another time it is "opened" to him, "That God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands." This seems to him a strange word, because both priests and people used to call their temples or churches dreadful places, holy ground, and the temple of God. It is in consequence of this "opening," and from a feeling that the word Church denotes a spiritual reality, and should not be applied to any building, that he from this time forward, with scrupulous persistency, calls the edifices set apart for public worship, not churches, but "steeple-houses."

All this new development, of course, brings him into collision with his former friend and counsellor "priest Stevens," who, while he is walking in the fields, comes to the house of his relations to inquire after him, and tells them that he is afraid of George for going after new lights. "At this," he says, "I smiled in myself, knowing what the Lord had opened in me concerning him and his brethren, but I told not my relations, who, though they saw beyond the priests, yet they went to hear them, and were grieved because I would not go also. But I brought them Scriptures, and told them there was an anointing within man to teach him, and that the Lord would teach His people Himself."

After these "openings" about clergymen and churches he tells us that he regarded the priests (the Presbyterian clergy of the Church of England) less, and looked more after "the Dissenting people."

"Among them I saw there was some tenderness; and many of them came afterwards to be convinced, for they had some openings. But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there

was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do: then, O! then I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition;' and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give Him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall let it? and this I knew experimentally. My desires after the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God, and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book, or writing. For though I read the Scriptures, that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew Him not, but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of Life drew me to His Son by His Spirit. Then the Lord gently led me along, and let me see His love, which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can get by history or books; and that love let me see myself, as I was without Him. I was afraid of all company, for I saw them perfectly where they were, through the love of God, which let me see myself. I had not fellowship with any people, priests, or professors, or any sort of separated people, but with Christ, who hath the key, and opened the door of Light and Life unto me."

Another of his "openings" seems to have been in antagonism to the narrowness of the religious teaching

of the day, Reformers and Catholics alike practically denying to one another the possibility of salvation.

"About the beginning of the year 1646, as I was going to Coventry, and approaching towards the gate, a consideration arose in me, how it was said, that 'all Christians are believers, both Protestants and Papists'; and the Lord opened to me that, if all were believers, then they were all born of God, and passed from death unto life; and that none were true believers but such; and though others said they were believers, yet they were not."

It is important to bear this saying of Fox's in mind, for it strikes the keynote of much of his later teaching. Harsh and intolerant as many of his utterances seem, they are directed against insincerity and hypocrisy (real or supposed), rather than against doctrinal views differing from his own. Toward the Roman Catholics especially the attitude of Fox and his followers seems always to have been more friendly than that of the other Protestant sects, notwithstanding the hopeless divergence of their religious teaching. It is thus not altogether surprising that they were often accused of being Papists in disguise: and even William Penn's friendly response at a later day to the advances of James II., and his willingness to accept toleration at his hands, though not approved of by the majority of his brethren, were not altogether inconsistent with this earliest attitude of Quakerism.

Another point which may be noticed in this narrative of Fox's early years, is his extraordinary silence as to those who were most nearly connected with him by blood. After those few opening sentences in the *Journal*, we hear nothing more about his parents; and the "relations"

who have been slightly alluded to in the extracts already quoted, are mere shadowy forms to us, even the degree of their relationship to the writer not being stated. Something like this appears to have been the mood of mind in which most of the early Friends looked back upon their old homes, and on those who had once inhabited them. They have themselves passed through the Red Sea, and care not to ask or to tell of what may have happened in the land of Egypt. Thus it comes to pass that, with very few exceptions, the pedigrees of modern Quaker families go up to the middle of the seventeenth century and there stop. There is generally full and precise information up to the first member of the family who was a Quaker, and beyond that all is a blank.

These years between 1643 and 1647 are evidently the formative period of his spiritual character—years undoubtedly of great sadness and struggle. "I cannot declare," he says, "the misery I was in, it was so great and heavy upon me;" but the trial seems to have been bravely borne, and we have no hint of any of those suggestions of suicide which are so frequent in cases of religious melancholia. In the history of most of the men who have exercised a powerful influence on the souls of their fellow-men, there has generally been a time of depression like that through which Fox was now passing. As the Apostle Paul says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" and it is perhaps necessary that those spirits which will be brought often into fierce collision with "the rulers of the darkness of this world," should have passed through a time of mental strife and agony, which makes all the mere bodily sufferings and hardships

that they will have afterwards to endure seem light in comparison.

Nor was his sky all dark even in this time of trial. As he could not declare the misery, so neither could he set forth the mercies of God to him in all his misery. He "sees the great love of God, and is filled with admiration at the infiniteness of it": when he returns home after a solitary walk he is "wrapped up in the love of God, so that I could not but admire the greatness of His love."

"While I was in that condition, it was opened unto me by the eternal light and power, and I therein clearly saw 'that all was done, and to be done, in and by Christ; and how He conquers and destroys this tempter, the devil, and all his works, and is a-top of him; and that all these troubles were good for me, and temptations for the trial of my faith, which Christ had given me.' The Lord opened me, that I saw through all these troubles and temptations; my living faith was raised, that I saw all was done by Christ, the Life, and my belief was in Him. When at any time my condition was veiled, my secret belief was stayed firm, and hope underneath held me, as an anchor in the bottom of the sea, and anchored my immortal soul to its Bishop, causing it to swim above the sea, the world, where all the raging waves, foul weather, tempests and temptations are. But oh! then did I see my troubles, trials, and temptations more clearly than ever I had done. As the light appeared, all appeared that is out of the light; darkness, death, temptations, the unrighteous, the ungodly, all was manifest and seen in the light. After this, a pure fire appeared in me; then I saw how He sat as a refiner's fire, and as fullers' soap;

then the spiritual discerning came into me, by which I did discern my own thoughts, groans, and sighs; and what it was that veiled me, and what it was that opened me. That which could not abide in the patience, nor endure the fire, in the light I found it to be the groans of the flesh, that could not give up to the will of God, which had so veiled me, that I could not be patient in all trials, troubles, and anguishes and perplexities; could not give up self to die by the cross, the power of God, that the living and quickened might follow Him; and that that which would cloud and veil from the presence of Christ, that which the sword of the Spirit cuts down, and which must die, might not be kept alive."

While he is in this seething condition of soul, he is tremulously sensitive to the spiritual phenomena of those years of national excitement and unrest. He hears of a woman in Lancashire that had fasted two-and-twenty days, and he travels to see her; "but when I came to her I saw that she was under temptation. When I had spoken to her what I had from the Lord, I left her, her father being one high in profession. Passing on, I went among the professors at Duckingfield and Manchester, where I stayed awhile, and declared truth among them. There were some convinced, who received the Lord's teaching, by which they were confirmed and stood in the truth. But the professors were in a rage, all pleading for sin and imperfection, and could not endure to hear talk of perfection, and of a holy and sinless life. But the Lord's power was over all; though they were chained under darkness and sin, which they pleaded for, and quenched the tender thing in them."

On the whole, the spiritual history of these years

of struggle seems to be best described by some words which come near their close. He has had shown to him by the Lord "the natures of those things which were hurtful without, [but] were [really] within in the hearts and minds of wicked men: the natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc." Then he goes on—

"I cried to the Lord, saying, 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' and the Lord answered, 'That it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions!' and in this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings."

CHAPTER IV

FOX'S MESSAGE

THE spiritual conflicts described in the last chapter having come to an end, external conflicts took their place. The militant preacher replaces the solitary searcher after truth. About the year 1648 Fox seems to have begun that series of missionary journeys which, except for his long intervals of imprisonment, may be said to have lasted for the rest of his life. He went sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, and though he occasionally speaks of himself as sleeping under a haystack, he does not appear to have ever lacked money for his simple travelling expenses. How far his parents and family sympathized with him in his work it is not easy to ascertain, but at any rate they seem always to have supplied him with what was needful for his maintenance. Of the personal appearance of the young preacher at this time we do not hear much, but from the words long afterwards applied to him by Ellwood ("graceful he was in countenance, manly in personage"), we may suppose that in his early manhood he was "a personable man." His attire was simple, but what seems most to have impressed the beholders was not its shape but its material. "It is indeed true," says the Quaker historian Sewel, "what a certain author,

viz. Gerard Croese, relates of him, that he was clothed with leather; but not, as the said author adds, because he could not or would not forget his former leather-work: but it was partly for the simplicity of that dress, and also because such a clothing was strong, and needed but little mending or repairing, which was commodious for him who had no steady dwelling-place, and everywhere in his travelling about sought to live in a lonely state."[1] Carlyle, in a well-known passage in *Sartor Resartus*, indulges in a fine burst of rhapsodical declamation over these leathern garments, but it does not appear that Fox himself, or his contemporaries, considered that there was anything extraordinary in his choosing skin rather than wool for the material of his clothing. His only allusion to it I believe is contained in one passage, in which he says, "The Lord's everlasting power was over the world, and reached to the hearts of people, and made both priests and professors tremble. It shook the earthly and airy spirit in which they held their profession of religion and worship, so that it was a dreadful thing unto them when it was told them, 'The man in leather breeches is come.'"

Let us consider what were the cardinal truths which George Fox, setting forth on his missionary journeys, believed himself commissioned to proclaim.

1. First and foremost the doctrine of the "Inward Light."—"I saw that Christ died for all men, and was a propitiation for all, and enlightened all men and women with His divine and saving light, and that none could be a true believer but who also believed in it. I saw that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, has appeared to all men, and that the manifestation

[1] *Hist. of Society of Friends*, i. 33 (Ed. 1833).

of the Spirit of God was given to every man to profit withal. These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter, but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His immediate spirit and power, as did the holy men of God by whom the Holy Scriptures were written. . . . With and by this divine power and Spirit of God, and the light of Jesus, I was to bring people off from their own ways to Christ, the new and living way: and from their churches which men had made and gathered, to the Church in God, the general assembly written in heaven, which Christ is the head of. . . . And I was to bring people off from all the world's religions, which are vain; that they might know the pure religion, might visit the fatherless, the widows, and the strangers, and keep themselves from the spots of the world. Then there would not be so many beggars, the sight of whom often grieved my heart, as it denoted so much hard-heartedness amongst them that professed the name of Christ. I was to bring them off from all the world's fellowships, and prayings, and singings, which stood in forms without power; that their fellowship might be in the Holy Ghost and in the Eternal Spirit of God; that they might pray in the Holy Ghost, and sing in the Spirit and with the grace that comes by Jesus. . . .

"I was to bring people off from Jewish ceremonies and from heathenish fables, and from men's inventions and windy doctrines, by which they blew the people about this way and the other way, from sect to sect; and [from] all their beggarly rudiments, with their schools and colleges for making ministers of Christ, who are indeed ministers of their own making, but not

of Christ's; and from all their images and crosses, and sprinkling of infants, with all their holy days (so called), and all their vain traditions which they had instituted since the apostles' days, which the Lord's power was against; in the dread and authority of which, I was moved to declare against them all, and against all that preached not freely, as being such as had not received freely from Christ." [1]

It may be inferred from this and similar passages that though the "Inward Light" is the main article of Fox's preaching, many other things, the disuse of sacraments, the abandonment of a liturgy, silent worship, unpaid ministry, are all in his mind necessary consequences of that doctrine.

2. *Christian Perfection.*—As has been said, the dominant teaching in Fox's earlier years was Calvinist; and Calvinism, especially in the mouths of the "professors" who had taken it up from worldly motives, had ever a tendency to slide down into Antinomianism. Much of Fox's preaching was directed against these doctrines, against what he called "pleading for sin," and towards the possibility of attaining a state of Christian perfection.

"While I was in prison," he says (at Derby), "divers professors came to discourse with me, and I had a sense before they spoke that they came to plead for sin and imperfection. I asked them, 'Whether they were believers and had faith?' and they said, 'Yes.' I asked them, 'In whom?' and they said, 'In Christ.' I replied, 'If ye are true believers in Christ, you are passed from death unto life, and if passed from death, then from sin that bringeth death. And if your faith be true, it will give you victory over sin and the devil,

[1] I. 37.

purify your hearts and consciences (for the true faith is held in a pure conscience), and bring you to please God, and give you access to Him again.' But they could not endure to hear of purity, and of victory over sin and the devil; for they said they could not believe that any could be free from sin on this side the grave. I bid them give over babbling about the Scriptures, which were holy men's words, whilst they pleaded for unholiness." [1]

But these discussions on the higher points of the Christian life, and even the disuse of sacraments, might possibly, in that age of unsettlement and debate, have failed to bring Fox and his friends into collision with the ruling powers. The two points of practice which perpetually brought them into conflict with the authorities, and which more than anything else caused them to spend years of their lives in the detestable prisons of seventeenth-century England, were their scruples about oaths and "hat-worship."

3. *Judicial swearing as well as profane swearing, are in Fox's view forbidden by Christ.*—As he expressed it in a short paper which was meant to be handed to the magistrates, "The world saith, 'Kiss the book,' but the book saith, 'Kiss the Son, lest He be angry.' And the Son saith, 'Swear not at all, but keep to Yea and Nay in all your communications, for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.'" [2]

Again in 1665, when Fox was in prison at Scarbro', Dr. Cradock came with a great company, and asked him, "What he was in prison for?" "I told him, 'for obeying the command of Christ and the apostle in not swearing. But if he, being both a doctor and a justice of the peace, could convince me that after Christ and

[1] I. 56. [2] I. 521.

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the apostle had forbidden swearing, they commanded Christians to swear, then I would swear. Here was the Bible,' I told him, 'he might if he could show me any such command.' The Doctor quoted the text, 'Ye shall swear in truth and righteousness.' 'Ay, it was written so in Jeremiah's time, but that was many ages before Christ commanded not to swear at all; but where is it written so, since Christ forbade all swearing? I could bring as many instances for swearing out of the Old Testament as thou, and it may be more; but of what force are they to prove swearing lawful in the New Testament, since Christ and the apostle had forbade it?'"

The English State and the followers of George Fox have long ago agreed to a compromise on this question of the oath. While the Church of England and the great majority of Englishmen hold in all good faith that it was not oaths in a court of justice, but profane swearing, which Jesus Christ meant to prohibit, they recognize that the disciples of Fox in equal good faith hold an opposite opinion, and that, like the "verily" of the first Quaker, the simple affirmation of his followers is a sufficient guarantee for truthful evidence. Thus not only the Quakers, but all persons who profess to have a conscientious objection to taking an oath, are now relieved from that obligation. But in the seventeenth century oath-taking was the very corner-stone of the Commonwealth. Who were those "recusants" whose partial toleration formed such a constant bone of contention between Charles and his Parliaments? who but the Roman Catholics, who refused to take the oaths of Supremacy and Abjuration? The Solemn League and Covenant, sworn to by the Parliaments of England

and Scotland, was in the eyes of the devout Presbyterian the pledge of all the future happiness of both countries. And so on throughout the political life of England, oaths were exacted and relied upon to a far greater degree than at the present day. In such a state of things George Fox and his friends, steadily and obstinately refusing to take any oath at all, were bound to come into collision with the authorities. The fanatical Protestant suspected them of being crypto-Catholics, the Parliament-man believed that they were plotting to bring in King Charles, the justices of Charles II., when he was at length seated on the throne, suspected them of being old Cromwellians; anything and everything might be believed of men who would on no account attest their loyalty by an oath.

4. *Hat-worship,* as the new teachers called it, was an even more fatal rock of offence than judicial swearing, especially as along with it went the use of the singular number in addressing a single person.

"Moreover," says Fox, "when the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low; and I was required to say Thee and Thou to all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small. And as I travelled up and down, I was not to bid people Good-morrow, or Good-evening, neither might I bow or scrape with my leg to any one, and this made the sects and professions to rage. . . . Oh! the rage that then was in the priests, magistrates, professors, and people of all sorts; but especially in priests and professors!—for though Thou to a single person was according to their own learning, their accidence and grammar rules, and according to the Bible, yet they could not bear to hear it; and as to the hat-

honour, because I could not put off my hat to them, it set them all in a rage.

"Oh! the rage and scorn, the heat and fury that arose! Oh! the blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men! For that soon tried all men's patience and sobriety what it was. Some had their hats violently plucked off and thrown away, so that they quite lost them. The bad language and evil usage we received on this account are hard to be expressed, besides the danger we were sometimes in of losing our lives for this matter, and that by the great professors of Christianity, who thereby discovered that they were not true believers."

Fox's own reason for objecting to this "hat-honour" is that "it was an honour below, which the Lord would lay in the dust and stain—an honour which proud men looked for who sought not the honour which came from God only; an honour invented by men in the fall, and in the alienation from God, who were offended if it were not given them, and yet they would be looked upon as saints, Church members, and great Christians." The reason generally alleged by the later Friends, that the removal of the covering of the head is a sign of reverence to God, which ought not to be rendered to any of His creatures, seems to be an afterthought; at least I do not find it brought forward in Fox's *Journal*.

The whole matter certainly now seems to belong to the category of the Infinitely Little; but, as we well know, it is even yet a point of honour with all judges and magistrates that no one shall remain covered in their presence. In pictures of the trial of King Charles I., both the royal prisoner and his judges are seen asserting their dignity by wearing their hats, and the

clerks of the court are the only persons who are happily free from the ugly incumbrance. Thus, while Fox's scruple was without doubt a genuine one, and was partly caused by the ceremonious bowings and scrapings which were the fashion of his day, there was in this scruple also a fruitful source of dispute with the magistrates before whom he was brought, some of whom under the Commonwealth were probably men lately raised to the bench, and on that account all the more tenacious of their "brief authority."

5. Lastly, in this confessedly incomplete catalogue of the characteristic points in George Fox's teaching must come his great *testimony against the lawfulness of war for Christian men.* In this position he was equally at variance with the 37th Article of Religion agreed upon in the Convocation of the Clergy of the Church of England,[1] and with the beliefs of that wonderful "New Model" Puritan army, who, with the high praises of God in their mouths, and with a two-edged sword in their hands, had hewn down a monarchy that had stood for eight centuries.

The Quaker "testimony against all war" has since Fox's time been buttressed by all manner of arguments, social, political, economical, to which he and most of his immediate disciples were strangers. It will be well, therefore, to quote a few sentences from his *Journal*, to show how it shaped itself in the mind of its first apostle.

"Now the time of my commitment to the House of Correction [in 1650] being very near out, and there being many new soldiers raised, the commissioners would have made me captain over them; and the soldiers

[1] "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons, and to serve in the wars."

cried, they would have none but me. So the keeper of the House of Correction was commanded to bring me before the commissioners and soldiers in the market-place; and there they offered that preferment, as they called it, asking me if I would not take up arms for the Commonwealth against Charles Stuart? I told them, I knew from whence all wars did arise, even from the lust, according to James's doctrine; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars. But they courted me to accept of their offer, and thought I did but compliment them. But I told them I was come into the covenant of peace, which was before wars and strifes were. They said they offered it in love and kindness to me because of my virtue; and such-like flattering words they used. But I told them, if that was their love and kindness, I trampled it under my feet. Then their rage got up, and they said, 'Take him away, gaoler, and put him into the dungeon amongst the rogues and felons.' So I was had away, and put into a lousy, stinking place, without any bed, amongst thirty felons, where I was kept almost half a year, unless it were at times; for they would sometimes let me walk in the garden, having a belief that I would not go away. . . . . .

"Now the time of Worcester fight coming on [3rd September, 1651], Justice Bennet sent the constables to press me for a soldier, seeing I would not voluntarily accept of a command. I told them I was brought off from outward wars. They came down again to give me press-money, but I would accept none. . . . . After a while the constables brought me before the commissioners, who said I should go for a soldier, but I told them I was dead to it. They said I was alive. I told

them, where envy and hatred are there is confusion." The end of the matter was that he was put in closer confinement (he was already in prison at Derby while these discussions were going on), and from his dungeon wrote a letter to Colonel Barton (who was also a preacher), and the rest that were concerned in his commitment, reminding them of the words of Christ, "Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Again, three years later, when Fox had been arrested and carried up to London by order of Colonel Hacker (the regicide), he was offered his liberty on the condition (often demanded from disturbers of the public peace) that he would promise not to bear arms against the Government.

"After Captain Drury had lodged me at the Mermaid [1] he left me there, and went to give the Protector an account of me. When he came to me again, he told me the Protector required that I should promise not to take up a carnal sword or weapon against him or the Government, as it then was, and I should write it in what words I saw good, and set my hand to it. I said little in reply to Captain Drury. But the next morning I was moved of the Lord to write a paper to the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, wherein I did in the presence of the Lord God declare that I denied [*i. e.* condemned] the wearing or drawing of a carnal sword or any other outward weapon against him or any man; and that I was set of God to stand a witness against all violence, and against the works of darkness; and to turn people from darkness to light, and to bring them from the causes of war and of fighting to the peaceable gospel, and from being evil-doers, which the magistrates'

[1] Over against the Mews at Charing Cross.

swords should be a terror to. When I had written what the Lord had given me to write, I set my name to it, and gave it to Captain Drury to hand to Oliver Cromwell, which he did."

Six years later (1659), when the premature Royalist insurrection of Sir George Booth had alarmed the nation (now no longer ruled by the mighty Protector), "some foolish and rash spirits," says Fox, "that came sometimes among us, were ready to take up arms; but I was moved of the Lord to warn and forbid them, and they were quiet. In the time of the Committee of Safety (so called) we were invited by them to take up arms, and great places and commands were offered some of us, but we denied [refused] them all, and declared against it both by word and writing, testifying that our weapons and armour were not carnal but spiritual." In order more effectually to warn his followers, Fox put forth a paper, exhorting them to take heed to "keep out of the powers of the earth, that run into wars and fightings, which make not for peace, but destroy it; such will not have the kingdom. . . . Let Friends keep out of other men's matters, and keep in that which answers the witness in them all, out of the man's part, where they must expect wars and dishonour."

Thus Fox's "testimony against war," though grounded on Scripture, especially on the well-known passage in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, was related, like all the other articles of his teaching, to his one central doctrine of the Inward Light. Wars and tumults, bloodshed, and the hot spirit of the duellist and the swashbuckler, belonged to "the unstaid state," "the carnal part," "the bustlings of the world," and prevented men from listening to "that which answers the witness in them all."

CHAPTER V

MISSIONARY JOURNEYS: MIDLAND COUNTIES AND YORKSHIRE

THE first four years of Fox's missionary life (1648—1651) were spent chiefly in the midland counties and Yorkshire. For some time he seems to have especially frequented the county of Nottingham, and he was described as "late of Mansfield in the County of Nottingham," in the *mittimus* under which he was committed to prison on October 30, 1650. It was during these early years of his preaching that some of his most characteristic and best-remembered spiritual adventures took place.

1. One of these showed a remarkable sympathy with the doubts and perplexities of a much later age.

"After this I returned into Nottinghamshire again, and went into the Vale of Beavor. As I went I preached repentance to the people; and there were many convinced in the Vale of Beavor, in many towns; for I stayed some weeks amongst them. One morning, as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me; but I sat still. And it was said, 'All things come by nature;' and the elements and the stars came over me, so that I was in a manner quite clouded with it. But as I sat still and said nothing, the people of the house perceived nothing.

And as I sat still under it, and let it alone, a living hope arose in me, and a true voice which said, 'There is a living God, who made all things.' And immediately the cloud and temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all; my heart was glad, and I praised the living God. After some time, I met with some people who had a notion that there was no God, but that all things came by nature. I had a great dispute with them, and overturned them, and made some of them confess that there is a living God. Then I saw that it was good that I had gone through that exercise."

It is interesting to note that in this passage Fox unconsciously anticipates the phraseology of one of our latest writers on the problems of a theistic faith. The temptation with which the Leicestershire shepherd was wrestling, was a temptation to what is generally spoken of as Materialism. Mr. Balfour, in his *Foundations of Religious Belief*, prefers to use the word "Naturalism," and that is just the phrase which expresses the proposition that suggested itself to the mind of George Fox, and over which his spirit triumphed—"All things come by nature."

This incident has suggested to the great Quaker poet of America one of his best and deepest utterances—

"Still, as of old in Beavor's vale,
O man of God! our hope and faith
The elements and stars assail,
And the awed spirit holds its breath,
Blown over by a wind of death.

* * * * *

Strange god of Force, with fear, not love
Its trembling worshippers! can prayers
Reach the shut ear of Fate, or move
Unpitying Energy to spare?
What doth the cosmic vastness care?

* * * * *

I pray for faith. I long to trust,
I listen with my heart, and hear
A voice without a sound. Be just,
Be true, be merciful; revere
The Word within thee. God is near.

* * * * *

O joy supreme! I know the Voice,
Like none beside in earth or sea,
Yea, more. O soul of mine, rejoice
By all that He requires of me:
I know what God Himself must be."

Thus "the Word within thee" is to Whittier, as to the founder of the society to which he belonged, the powerful voice which drowns that other dread suggestion of the Sadducean intellect, "All things come by nature." It is immediately after his record of this battle with a spiritual foe, that Fox describes some of his strivings after a much humbler aim, the promotion of social peace and justice between man and man.

"At a certain time when I was at Mansfield there was a sitting of the justices about hiring of servants, and it was upon me from the Lord to go and speak to the justices, that they should not oppress the servants in their wages. So I walked towards the inn where they sat, but finding a company of fiddlers there I did not go in, but thought to come in the morning, when I might have a more serious opportunity to discourse with them, not thinking that a seasonable time. But when I came again in the morning they were gone, and I was struck even blind that I could not see. I inquired of the innkeeper where the justices were to sit that day, and he told me at a town eight miles off. My sight began to come to me again, and I went and ran thitherward as fast as I could. When I was come to the house where they were, and many servants with

them, I exhorted the justices not to oppress the servants in their wages, but to do that which was right and just to them, and I exhorted the servants to do their duties, and serve honestly, etc. They all received my exhortation kindly, for I was moved of the Lord therein."

2. It was apparently in the year 1649 that Fox underwent his first imprisonment, the place of his confinement being Nottingham, and the cause a protest against what seemed to him an undue exaltation of the Scriptures. His own account of the matter is as follows:—

"Now as I went towards Nottingham on a first-day in the morning, with Friends to a meeting there, when I came on the top of a hill in sight of the town I espied the great steeple-house, and the Lord said unto me, 'Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, and against the worshippers therein.' So I said nothing of this to the Friends that were with me, but went on with them to the meeting, where the mighty power of the Lord was amongst us; in which I left Friends sitting in the meeting, and I went away to the steeple-house. When I came there all the people looked like fallow ground, and the priest (like a great lump of earth) stood in his pulpit above. He took for his text these words of Peter, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.' And he told the people that this was the Scriptures, by which they were to try all doctrines, religions, and opinions. Now the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, and so strong in me, that I could not hold, but was made to cry out and say, 'Oh no, it is not the Scriptures;' and I told them what it was, namely, the Holy

Spirit by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures, whereby opinions, religions, and judgments were to be tried, for it led into all truth, and so gave the knowledge of all truth. The Jews had the Scriptures, and yet resisted the Holy Ghost, and rejected Christ, the bright morning-star. They persecuted Christ and His apostles, and took upon them to try their doctrines by the Scriptures, but erred in judgment, and did not try them aright, because they tried without the Holy Ghost. As I spake thus amongst them, the officers came and took me away, and put me into a nasty, stinking prison, the smell whereof got so into my nose and throat that it very much annoyed me.

"But that day the Lord's power sounded so in their ears, that they were amazed at the voice, and could not get it out of their ears for some time after, they were so reached by the Lord's power in the steeple-house. At night they took me before the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of the town, and when I was brought before them, the mayor was in a peevish, fretful temper, but the Lord's power allayed him. They examined me at large, and I told them how the Lord had moved me to come. After some discourse between them and me, they sent me back to prison again, but some time after the head sheriff, whose name was John Reckless, sent for me to his house. When I came in his wife met me in the hall and said, 'Salvation is come to our house.' She took me by the hand, and was much wrought upon by the power of the Lord God; and her husband, and children, and servants were much changed, for the power of the Lord wrought upon them. I lodged at the sheriff's, and great meetings we had in his house. Some persons of considerable condition in the world

came to them, and the Lord's power appeared eminently amongst them. This sheriff sent for the other sheriff, and for a woman they had had dealings with in the way of trade; and he told her before the other sheriff that they had wronged her in their dealings with her (for the other sheriff and he were partners), and that they ought to make her restitution. This he spoke cheerfully, but the other sheriff denied it, and the woman said that she knew nothing of it. But the friendly sheriff said it was so, and that the other knew it well enough; and having discovered the matter, and acknowledged the wrong done by them, he made restitution to the woman, and exhorted the other sheriff to do the like. The Lord's power was with this friendly sheriff, and wrought a mighty change in him, and great openings he had. The next market day, as he was walking with me in the chamber in his slippers, he said, 'I must go into the market, and preach repentance to the people,' and accordingly he went into the market, and into several streets, and preached repentance to the people. Several others also in the town were moved to speak to the mayor and magistrates, and to the people, exhorting them to repent. Hereupon the magistrates grew very angry, and sent for me from the sheriff's house, and committed me to the common prison. When the assize came on, there was one moved to come and offer up himself for me, body for body; yea, life also; but when I should have been brought before the judge, the sheriff's man being somewhat long in fetching me to the sessions-house, the judge was risen before I came. At which I understood the judge was somewhat offended, and said 'he would have admonished the youth if he had been brought before him,' for I was

then imprisoned by the name of a youth. So I was returned to prison again, and put into the common gaol. The Lord's power was great among Friends, but the people began to be very rude, wherefore the governor of the castle sent down soldiers and dispersed them, and after that they were quiet. But both priests and people were astonished at the wonderful power that broke forth, and several of the priests were made tender, and some did confess to the power of the Lord."

It may be remarked, as to the incident which led to this imprisonment, that Fox does not appear to have repeated the offence of actually interrupting a preacher in his sermon. It would probably be generally admitted now, even by those who have most sympathy with Fox's teachings, that the preacher was right in interpreting the passage before him (2 Peter i. 19) of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

3. How long the imprisonment at Nottingham lasted we are not informed. The next imprisonment, at Derby, lasted for almost a year, from October 30, 1650, to the beginning of winter 1651. Again it was his utterances in the parish church which brought him into trouble. He was walking in his chamber, and heard a bell ring, which "struck at my life at the hearing of it; so I asked the woman of the house what the bell rang for? She said there was to be a great lecture there that day, and many of the officers of the army, and priests, and preachers were to be there, and a colonel that was a preacher." This colonel, as we learn from a later passage,[1] was Colonel Barton, who sat three years later as a member of the Second Council of the "Barebones" Parliament.[2] Altogether the assembly in the parish

[1] I. 73.

[2] See Masson's *Life of Milton*, iv. 525.

church of Derby that day was as little like an ordinary Church of England congregation of the times either of Elizabeth or Victoria as can well be imagined, and could Archbishop Laud have been called from his grave in Allhallows, Barking, to witness that day's proceedings, he would have had as little sympathy with the Puritan lecturer or the preaching colonel as with the young man in the leather breeches, whose strange, excited discourse broke in upon their long-drawn expositions.

"Then was I moved of the Lord," he says, "to go up to them; and when they had done I spoke to them what the Lord commanded me, and they were pretty quiet. But there came an officer, and took me by the hand, and said I must go before the magistrates, and the other two that were with me. It was about the first hour after noon that we came before them. They asked me why we came thither; I said, 'God moved us to do so;' and I told them, 'God dwells not in temples made with hands.' I told them also, all their preaching, baptism, and sacrifices would never sanctify them; and bid them look unto Christ in them, and not unto men; for it is Christ that sanctifies. Then they ran into many words; but I told them they were not to dispute of God and Christ, but to obey Him. The power of God thundered amongst them, and they did fly like chaff before it. They put me in and out of the room often, hurrying me backward and forward; for they were from the first hour till the ninth at night in examining me. Sometimes they would tell me, in a deriding manner, that I was taken up in raptures. At last they asked me whether I was sanctified? I answered: 'Yes; for I was in the paradise of God.' Then they asked me if I had no sin? I answered, 'Christ,

my Saviour, has taken away my sin, and in Him there is no sin.' They asked, how we knew that Christ did abide in us? I said, 'By His Spirit that He has given us.' They temptingly asked if any of us were Christ? I answered, 'Nay, we were nothing: Christ was all.' They said, 'If a man steal, is it no sin?' I answered, 'All unrighteousness is sin.' So when they had wearied themselves in examining me, they committed me and one other man to the House of Correction in Derby for six months as blasphemers."

This committal took place no doubt under the Blasphemy Law passed by the two Houses of Parliament in May 1648. According to the provisions of that extraordinary Statute, Fox might have been condemned to suffer the pains of death, as in a case of felony without benefit of clergy, for maintaining *e.g.* that the Song of Solomon is not the Word of God. As he was only committed to prison, not put to death, his alleged blasphemy must have been one of the minor transgressions against Presbyterian orthodoxy enumerated in the second part of the Statute, such as the assertion "that the baptizing of infants is unlawful," "that the observation of the Lord' Day is not obligatory," or "that the Church government by Presbytery is anti-Christian and unlawful." Fox himself gives us no hint in what his alleged blasphemy consisted, but in a discussion between a dogmatic preaching colonel, and an eager, mystical, and imperfectly educated shepherd-prophet, it is easy to understand that propositions might be affirmed or denied by the latter which would bring him within the range of that wide-reaching Statute.

At this point we must note that Gervase Bennet, J.P.,

the magistrate who, along with Colonel Barton, signed the *mittimus* for his committal to the House of Correction, was also the inventor of a word, which in the course of two centuries and a half has had no small currency among the English-speaking peoples. The keeper of the prison, in a dream one night, saw the Day of Judgment, "and I saw George there, and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and spoken so much against him to the ministers and professors, and to the justices, and in taverns and alehouses." In his distress of mind he came, like the gaoler of Philippi, to implore his prisoner's pardon, and next morning he went and told the justices (says the *Journal*) "that he and his house had been plagued for my sake, and one of the justices replied (as he reported to me) that the plagues were on them too for keeping me. This was justice Bennet of Derby, who was the first that called us QUAKERS, because I bid them tremble at the word of the Lord. This was in the year 1650."

The name by which the little newly-formed Church at first seems to have called itself was "Children of the Light." Afterwards they chose the name which they still use, "The Society of Friends," to which was generally added, "in scorn called Quakers."

George Fox's imprisonment at Derby lasted, as I have said, for about a year. It was strangely unlike anything that takes place in the monotonous English prisons of to-day. "Professors" came to discourse with the prisoner, who, in words already quoted,[1] upheld the high standard of Christian perfection against what he called their "pleading for sin."

[1] See p. 36.

The magistrates gave leave that he should have liberty to walk a mile. He asked to be shown the extent of his one mile radius, and scrupulously adhered to its limits, often taking opportunity in his perambulations to preach in the market and the streets, warning the people to repent of their wickedness, but always returning conscientiously to his prison, to the no small disappointment of his unwilling persecutors, who, as the gaoler afterwards confessed, had granted this permission in the hope that he would avail himself of it to escape, and so ease them of their plague. "But I told him I was not of that spirit."

Once while he was in this prison he was visited by a trooper, who while sitting in church had heard God's voice saying to him, "Dost thou not know that My servant is in prison? Go to him for direction." Fox's discourse to this man relieved the burden on his soul. "He began to have a good understanding in the Lord's truth, and to be sensible of God's mercies." Soon he "began to speak boldly in his quarters amongst the soldiers and to others concerning truth (for the Scriptures were very much opened to him), insomuch that he said 'his colonel was as blind as Nebuchadnezzar, to cast the servant of the Lord into prison.' Upon this his colonel had a spite against him, and at Worcester fight, the year after, when the two armies were lying near one another, two came out from the King's army and challenged any two of the Parliament army to fight with them; his colonel made choice of him and another to answer the challenge. And when in the encounter his companion was slain, he drove both his enemies within musket-shot of the town without firing a pistol at them. This, when he returned, he told me with his

own mouth. But when the fight was over, he saw the deceit and hypocrisy of the officers; and being sensible how wonderfully the Lord had preserved him, and seeing also to the end of fighting, he laid down his arms."

It was at "Worcester fight" (September 3, 1651) that this young convert fought his duel, and the same crisis in the fortunes of the Commonwealth suggested to the Derby magistrates (as we have already seen) the notable device of getting rid of their prisoner by sending him to fight against Charles Stuart. This his "testimony against all fighting," as being out of the Divine life, forbade him to do either as officer or private, and his refusal seems to have doubled the length and increased the severity of his confinement.

At length this strange struggle between the criminal and his judges came to an end. The man whom they had at first called a deceiver, a seducer, and a blasphemer, they confessed to be an honest, virtuous man, and "at length they were made to turn me out of jail about the beginning of winter in the year 1651, after I had been a prisoner in Derby almost a year, six months in the House of Correction, and the rest of the time in the common jail and dungeon."

4. The long imprisonment at Derby had perhaps injured the mental as well as the bodily health of the Quaker apostle, for it was shortly after his liberation that an event occurred which has cast more doubt on the perfect soundness of his intellect than any other incident in his career. This is his celebrated denunciation of "the bloody city of Lichfield," which shall be told in his own words.

"As I was walking along with several Friends, I

lifted up my head, and I saw three steeple-house spires, and they struck at my life. I asked them what place that was, and they said Lichfield. Immediately the word of the Lord came to me that I must go thither. Being come to the house we were going to, I wished the Friends that were with me to walk into the house, saying nothing to them whither I was to go. As soon as they were gone I stepped away, and went by my eye over hedge and ditch, till I came within a mile of Lichfield, where, in a great field, there were shepherds keeping their sheep. Then I was commanded by the Lord to pull off my shoes. I stood still, for it was winter, and the word of the Lord was like a fire in me. So I put off my shoes, and left them with the shepherds, and the poor shepherds trembled and were astonished. Then I walked on about a mile, and as soon as I was got within the city, the word of the Lord came to me again, saying, 'Cry, Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield!' So I went up and down the streets crying with a loud voice, '*Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!*' It being market day, I went into the market-place, and to and fro in the several parts of it, and made stands, crying as before, '*Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!*' And no one laid hands on me; but as I went thus crying through the streets, there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market-place appeared like a pool of blood. When I had declared what was upon me, and felt myself clear, I went out of the town in peace; and returning to the shepherds, I gave them some money, and took my shoes of them again. But the fire of the Lord was so in my feet, and all over me, that I did not matter to put on my shoes any more, and was at a stand whether I

should or not, till I felt freedom from the Lord so to do; and then after I had washed my feet I put on my shoes again. After this a deep consideration came upon me, why or for what reason I should be sent to cry against that city, and call it the bloody city. For though the Parliament had the minster one while, and the King another, and much blood had been shed in the town during the wars between them, yet that was no more than had befallen other places. But afterwards I came to understand that in the Emperor Diocletian's time, a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield. So I was to go, without my shoes, through the channel of their blood, and into the pool of their blood in the market-place, that I might raise up the memorial of the blood of those martyrs which had been shed above a thousand years before, and lay cold in their streets. So the sense of this blood was upon me, and I obeyed the word of the Lord. Ancient records testify how many of the Christian Britons suffered there. Much I could write of the sense I had of the blood of the martyrs that hath been shed in this nation for the name of Christ, both under the ten persecutions and since; but I leave it to the Lord, and to His book, out of which all shall be judged, for His book is a most certain record, and His Spirit a true recorder."

We have in this passage a good illustration of the way in which the utterances of the fervid prophet-souled man, who knew no book but the Bible, were worked over, and, so to speak, rationalized by the more highly-instructed men, such as Penn and Ellwood, who afterwards became his disciples. An age better versed in the principles of historical criticism perceives that the attempted explanation of this strange adventure,

drawn from the legendary story of a Diocletianic persecution, is no explanation at all. It would be of more purpose—as we have already indicated some points of resemblance between the career of Fox and that of Savonarola—to recall the wonderful prediction which the great Dominican, in the early days of his preaching, uttered with fervid eloquence against the city of Brescia. Only in that case there was a real fulfilment of the prophecy when Gaston de Foix took Brescia, and made rivers of blood to flow down her streets. In the case of "the bloody city of Lichfield," no such calamity attested the truth of Fox's prophetic mission. A candid biographer must confess, that in that wild and terrible time, when the blood of Englishmen had been shed by their brothers on many a battle-field, when cities like Lichfield had been taken and retaken by Cavalier and Roundhead, and when the final tragedy of Whitehall had thrown a spell of horror not only over England, but over all Europe, the brain of Fox, perhaps weakened by the rigours of a long imprisonment, perceived wrongly the spiritual intimations which were conveyed to it, and transferred to the future that sense of horror at scenes of violence which really reached it from the past.

In the year 1651 Fox's mission, hitherto confined to the Midland counties, passed over into Yorkshire. It was at this time, in the neighbourhood of Wakefield, that he won over to his side a convert who was to be first a powerful ally, then an uneasy rival, and finally a damaging caricaturist of Quaker teaching, the fanatical Cromwellian soldier James Naylor.

At Cranswick, in the East Riding, he was taken by another Cromwellian soldier to call on a magistrate

whom he calls Justice Hotham, and who was probably a relation of the Sir John Hotham whose refusal to admit the King's troops within the citadel of Hull was the beginning of the Civil War. This Justice Hotham, who was "a tender man, one that had some experience of God's workings in his heart," took Fox with him into his closet, "where, sitting together, he told me he had known that principle [of the Inward Light] these ten years, and was glad that the Lord did now publish it abroad to the people. After a while there came a priest" (no doubt a Puritan divine) "to visit him, with whom also I had some discourse concerning Truth. But his mouth was quickly stopped, for he was nothing but a notionist, and not in possession of what he talked of."

So Fox moved about on his missionary journey through the great county of York. He preached in Beverley Minster, apparently with something more than mere endurance on the part of the listeners, for a great lady of the neighbourhood informed Justice Hotham that "there came an angel or spirit into the church at Beverley, and spoke the wonderful things of God, to the astonishment of all that were there; and when it had done it passed away, and they did not know whence it came nor whither it went, but it astonished all, both priests, professors, and magistrates of the town." [1]

[1] We have here an interesting little detail in the history of costume. A certain Captain Pursloe accompanies George Fox to church (instead of Justice Hotham, who is afraid that if he goes with him he shall be obliged as a magistrate to commit him to prison). "But he was glad," he said, "when Captain Pursloe came up to go with me, yet neither of them was dressed, nor had his band about his neck. *It was a strange thing then to see a man come into a steeple-house* [church] without a band, yet Captain Pursloe went in with me without his band; the Lord's power and truth had so affected him that he minded it not."

At York Minster his reception was less favourable. After the minister had ended his sermon, Fox told the congregation that he had something from the Lord God to speak to the priest and people. "Then say on quickly," said a "professor" that was among them, for it was frost and snow and very cold weather. When it became plain to the audience that he had no new doctrine to expound, but only to remind them that God Almighty looked for fruits from among them, and that mere words were no life-giving atmosphere for the soul, either the cold of the great minster, or the unattractive character of the message, made them impatient, and they hurried him forth, and threw him down the steps, but he arose unhurt, and went to his lodgings. "Several," says Fox, "were convinced there, for the very groans that arose from the weight and oppression that was upon the Spirit of God in me would open people and strike them, and make them confess that the groans which broke forth through me did reach them: for my life was burdened with their profession without possession, and words without fruit."

He passed on into Cleveland, and found there some people who apparently had for a time professed doctrines similar to his own, but who were then "all shattered to pieces, and the heads of them turned Ranters." He told them that this change had come over them because they had not patiently waited upon God to feel His power in their meetings. For want of this patient waiting they had "spoken themselves dry: they had spent their [spiritual] portions; and not living in that which they spoke of, they were now become dry. They had some kind of meetings still, but they took tobacco and drank ale in their meetings, and were grown light

and loose." The Ranter chiefs of the congregation seem to have resisted Fox's admonitions, but the rank and file accepted his teaching with eagerness, and a large meeting was set up in that place.

At another town in the same region, a leader of the Ranters named Bushel came to a discussion with Fox, which he opened in an unexpected manner. "He told me he had had a vision of me, that I was sitting in a great chair, and that he was to come and put off his hat, and bow down to the ground before me: and he did so, and many other flattering words he spoke. I told him it was his own figure, and said unto him, 'Repent, thou beast.' He said it was jealousy in me to say so. Then I asked him the ground of jealousy, and how it came to be bred in man, and the nature of a beast, what made it, and how it was bred in man. For I saw him directly in the nature of a beast: and therefore I wished to know of him how that nature came to be bred in him. . . . So I stopped his mouth, and all his fellow Ranters were silenced, for he was the head of them."

A little later, when Fox returned into this district, and was cordially welcomed by his friends Captain Pursloe and Justice Hotham, the latter said to him, "If God had not raised up this principle of light and life which you preach, the nation had been overcome with Ranterism, and all the justices in the nation could not have stopped it with all their laws, because (said he) they would have said as we said, and done as we commanded, and yet have kept their own principle still. But this principle of truth (said he) overthrows their principle and the root and ground thereof, and therefore he was glad the Lord had raised up this principle of life and truth."

CHAPTER VI

SWARTHMOOR HALL

In the summer of 1652, when Fox was just entering upon the twenty-ninth year of his age, he paid his memorable visit to the Fells of Swarthmoor. Like Mohammed's flight to Medina, or Calvin's journey to Geneva, this visit marked a crisis in the history of a new religious movement. Hitherto the preaching of the Quaker missionaries, though earnest and powerful, had been perhaps of a somewhat sporadic kind, and had not built up an organized and coherent body of believers. Now, under the fostering care of a devout and energetic woman, mistress of a hospitable country-house, and surrounded by a little clan of children and dependents, who were partakers of her enthusiasm, Quakerism in the north of England grew to such a size as seriously to alarm the "professors" of the other churches and sects, and to give a cruel edge to their efforts for its suppression.

The district of Furness, in which Swarthmoor Hall is situated, is one of the most picturesque in England. The hematite iron ore which lay concealed beneath its surface in George Fox's days has within the last half-century been abundantly worked, and the district, which was purely agricultural and pastoral, has now a

large mining and manufacturing population. But though the blast furnaces of Barrow now vomit forth their clouds of smoke to the sky, they do not avail to greatly mar the beauty of the landscapes of Furness. Still on a summer day the hills round Lancaster lie in dreamy beauty on the other side of the wide-reaching Morecambe Bay; and still the blue dome of Coniston Old Man, and the ridge of Walney Scar, are seen from the northern windows of Swarthmoor Hall rising into a pure and smokeless sky.

Till the middle of the present century Furness was still practically an island. The Coniston range shut it out from Cumberland, the lake and mountains of Windermere separated it from Westmoreland; though politically forming part of the county of Lancaster, it had to be approached from that town by a long and sometimes perilous journey, which could only be performed at low water across the broad sands which made the estuaries of two rivers, the Kent and the Leven.[1]

In the Middle Ages, guides over these dangerous sands were provided, and hospitality to strangers was practised by the abbots of the two great monasteries of Furness and Cartmel, who owned between them nearly the whole of the peninsula. Now, of course,

[1] See a valuable paper by Mr. John Fell (a collateral descendant of Judge Fell) in *Transactions of Cumberland and Westmoreland Archæological Society*, xi. 368. As he says, "With the estuary of the Dudden to the north, and the watershed boundaries between Cumberland and Westmoreland, Lonsdale north of the sands may be described as an island, and its inhabitants, until the railway connected it with the main body of the country, as an insular people. Up to a comparatively recent date it may be said that the same families had been settled in the district from time immemorial. A stranger was promptly detected, and without much ceremony made aware that he was regarded in the local phraseology as an 'outcome.'"

these great ecclesiastics had disappeared from the scene, and the descendants of the men who had once held land under them as their vassals were now emerging into the position of landowners on their own account. One of the largest of these landowners was Thomas Fell, or as he is more often called Judge Fell, who lived at Swarthmoor Hall, a comfortable country house about three-quarters of a mile from Ulverston, which was probably built by his father. Thomas Fell, who was born about 1598, was descended from an old Furness family of the kind just described, and he or his immediate ancestors had invested largely in the lands which had once belonged to the Abbey of Furness and the Priory of Conishead. Having kept his terms at Gray's Inn, and been called to the Bar, he espoused the cause of the Parliament against the King at the outbreak of the Civil War, and was successively appointed Justice of the Peace for Lancashire (1641), Parliamentary Sequestrator of Forfeited Estates (1642), and chief layman in the "classical presbytery," which was to discharge duties similar to a bishop's in the district of Furness (1646). In 1645, as one of the so-called "Recruiters," he was chosen member of Parliament for his county, and (probably soon after) he was appointed one of the Judges of Assize of the Chester and North Wales Circuit. In 1652 he went the Northern Circuit along with Bradshaw the regicide, and three years later he succeeded that politician in the high office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.[1]

Altogether it is obvious that "Judge Fell" was a man of high position both in his county and in the

[1] For these details I am indebted to Dr. Henry Barber's *Furness and Cartmel Notes*, p. 232.

Parliamentary party. He refused to be reckoned among the adherents of Oliver Cromwell, and probably expressed openly his disapproval of the dissolution of the Long Parliament, but he seems to have remained on friendly terms with the great Protector, who presented him on some occasion with a silver cup, which was long preserved in the Judge's family.

It was not, however, the quiet, prosperous, moderate-minded lawyer but his enthusiastic wife who made the name of Swarthmoor famous in the religious history of England. In 1632, twenty years before George Fox's visit to Furness, the rising barrister Thomas Fell married Margaret Askew, daughter of the owner of the neighbouring estate of Marsh Grange, but also—a far more significant fact—great-grand-daughter of Anne Askew, whose fame yet survives as one of the noblest and the most pathetically wronged of the Protestant martyrs under Henry the Eighth. Something of the spirit of her martyred ancestress survived in Margaret Fell. Though she was not tried by the rack or the fire of martyrdom, it was hers to suffer loss of worldly goods, and to spend long years in loathsome dungeons. During these years of imprisonment, the verses composed by her great progenitor, when she too was languishing in Newgate prison, may often have recurred to her memory :—

"Like as the armèd knyghte
Appointed to the field,
With thys world will I fyghte,
And faythe shall be my shield.

* * * *

Faythe in the fathers olde
Obtayned righteoysness,

Which makes me verye bolde,
To feare no worlde's distress.

* * * *

Thou sayst, Lord, whoso knocke
To them wilt Thou attende:
Undo therefor the locke,
And Thy strong power sende.

On Thee my care I cast,
For all their cruel spyght
I set not by their hast,
For Thou art my delyght."

Margaret Fell, who was sixteen years younger than her husband, was only eighteen when he brought her as a bride to Swarthmoor Hall. She was now a middle-aged woman of eight-and-thirty, the mother of six daughters[1] and one son, ranging from infancy up to nineteen years of age. The house in which they lived is still preserved, and though now only a farm-house, it is in a good state of preservation, and is well worthy of a visit, even independently of its special connection with Quaker history; for, perhaps owing to the reverence with which Fox's memory was regarded, it has almost entirely escaped the effacing hand of the modern builder, and remains a complete picture of an English country house of three centuries ago. We still see the tolerably spacious dining-hall in which Fox's disciples used to assemble, the little justice-room adjoining it, in which the Judge used to transact his business, and where he would often sit with half-opened door to hear the preaching which he would not too manifestly countenance. Overhead is the bed-room which tradition assigns to Fox as his guest-

[1] A seventh daughter, Rachel, from whom most of Judge Fell's living descendants sprang, was born in 1653.

chamber, and near it the Judge's bedroom, wainscotted, and with beautifully carved wood-work. Between these two rooms is a closet which might have been a secret hiding-place, and a window, formerly a door in the outer wall of the house, where, as the legend says, Fox used to stand and address the people from an elevation of some twelve or thirteen feet, when the multitude was too large to be assembled in the great hall.

We leave the house, and journeying for about half-a-mile through fields and country lanes, we reach the little meeting-house, which bears on its front the inscription—

E DONO G. FOX

1688.

After the Quaker church had used Swarthmoor Hall as its place of meeting for twenty-six years, its founder bought a little piece of ground, and on it erected this modest edifice, which he presented to "the Monthly Meeting of Swarthmoor." The windows have been unfortunately modernized, but in its high gallery (or "loft") the house still shows the primitive pattern of the places of worship reared by the "Friends." The most interesting relic in the place is the old black-letter Bible presented to the meeting by George Fox, and still bearing the links of the iron chain by which in old time it was fastened to the reading-desk.[1]

Such was Swarthmoor Hall in the summer of 1652, when George Fox came to it in the course of his

[1] This Bible is a specimen of the edition of 1541, commonly called the "Treacle" Bible, from the translation of Jeremiah viii. 22—"Is there no treacle [balm] in Gilead? is there no physician there?"

missionary journey. He had been spending some weeks in the dales of Yorkshire and Lancashire, regions now filled with busy industries, then guiltless of a factory chimney. He had with difficulty climbed the steep and high hill of Pendle in Lancashire, and looking over the intervening lands to the Irish Channel, had seen a Pisgah-vision of "the places in which a great people should be gathered." Journeying onwards to Wensleydale and Sedbergh, he had there a vision of "a great people in white raiment coming to the Lord"; and from thence passing into Westmoreland, he made converts of two Puritan ministers, Francis Howgill and John Audland, who became eminent preachers among "the Children of Light." So through Kendal (which was one day to be one of the great centres of Quakerism in the north of England), Fox came into Furness, and in process of time reached the hospitable shelter of Swarthmoor Hall. The Hall was a well-known resting-place for Puritan lecturers, who, as Margaret Fell says, "often had prayers and religious exercises in our family. This I hoped I did well in, but often feared I was short of the right way; and after this manner I was inquiring and seeking about twenty years."

On the day of Fox's arrival, it happened that the mistress of the Hall was absent, but ere long the clergyman of Ulverston, a certain Mr. Lampitt, appeared upon the scene. Of him, as of "Priest Stevens" of Fenny Drayton, we have two opposite, and in fact irreconcilable accounts. In Calamy's *Ejected Ministers* he appears as "a warm and lively preacher in the region beyond the sands, who lived obscurely (after his ejection on St. Bartholomew's Day), and died in the year 1677." In Fox's *Journal* he figures as "a high notionist with

whom I had much reasoning, for he talked of high notions and perfection, and thereby deceived the people. He would have owned me, but I could not own nor join with him, he was so full of filth."

A discussion followed, as to which one thing at least is clear, that neither of the disputants understood what the other was contending for. According to Fox, Lampitt said "he was above John, and made as if he knew all things." He confessed "he had been under a cross in things, but now he could sing psalms and do anything." Fox told him, "Now he could see a thief and join hand in hand with him, but he could not preach Moses nor the prophets, nor John nor Christ, except he were in the same spirit that they were in." At night Mrs. Fell returned, and was distressed to hear from her children of the dispute between the guest and Priest Lampitt, "because she was in profession with him: but he hid his dirty actions from them. At night," continues Fox, "we had much reasoning, and I declared the truth to her and her family."

Next day Lampitt returned, and had another argument in the presence of Margaret Fell, "who then clearly discerned the priest. A convincement of the Lord's truth came upon her and her family." There was one of the great Parliamentary fasts due about this time, and a "lecture" (*i. e.* a sermon of some hours' duration) was to be given in the parish church of Ulverston. Mrs. Fell asked Fox to accompany her to the church. He at first refused, preferring to wander about in the fields, but afterwards, in obedience, as he conceived, to a Divine command, he went into the church, where it may be supposed the lecture was ended, for the people were singing a hymn. To quote

his own words, "When I came Lampitt was singing with his people: but his spirit was so foul, and the matter which they sang so unsuitable to their states, that after they had done singing, I was moved of the Lord to speak to him and the people." Having asked and obtained leave to do so from the clergyman, Fox stood up on a form and repeated the text, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart." He went on with his favourite theme—Christ the Light of the world: the universality of this Light: an entreaty to the congregation to come to it, that by its power they might be gathered to God. As he spoke, the mistress of Swarthmoor Hall stood up in the family pew wondering at his doctrine, for she had never heard anything like it before. "The Scriptures," said Fox, "what are they but the words of prophets, of Christ and His apostles, uttered by men who enjoyed and possessed this Light which they received from the Lord? What have you to do with the words of the Scriptures, unless you come to the same Spirit which gave them forth? You open the Bible, and say, 'Christ saith this,' and the 'apostles say that,' but what do you say yourselves? Art thou a child of the Light? Hast thou walked in the Light? What thou sayest concerning God, does it come to thee inwardly from Him?"

"These questions," says Margaret Fell, "cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat down in my pew again, and cried bitterly; and I cried in my spirit to the Lord, 'We are all thieves: we are all thieves: we have taken the Scriptures in words, and know nothing of them in ourselves.'"

The preacher meanwhile went on, and with something of an old prophet's fervour denounced the false prophets and priests and deceivers of the people. "The Lord God," he said, "is come to teach His people by His own Spirit, and to bring them off from all their old ways, religions, churches, and worships: for all these things are but talking with other men's words, and they are out of the Life and Spirit in which those men dwelt by whom the Scriptures were given forth."

At this point of the discourse a Puritan magistrate named Sawrey called out to the churchwarden, "Take him away," but from the squire's pew was heard the voice of Margaret Fell exclaiming, "Let him alone—why may not he speak as well as any other?" Either in complaisance to his hospitable neighbour, or out of a desire to give Fox a fair hearing, Lampitt gave his voice on the same side, "Let him speak." Thus between one master and another the churchwarden went backwards and forwards, often seizing hold of Fox's arm, and then letting him go again. At length the strange sermon was ended, and the people of Ulverston dispersed to their homes, much meditating, we may be sure, on the unusual scenes of that fast day.[1]

In the evening Fox addressed the family in Swarthmoor Hall. Mother and daughters, mistress and servants, seem to have been all convinced by his ministry, and became lifelong adherents of the new principle of the Inward Light. One at least of the servants[2] became afterwards a celebrated Quaker preacher; but

[1] I have tried to combine here the two narratives of George Fox in the *Journal*, and Margaret Fox in her "Testimony," giving the preference to the latter where the details of the story differ.

[2] Thomas Salthouse.

the most interesting conversion was that of a young lad named William Caton, then about seventeen years old, who had been for three years in the Judge's family, being entertained as bosom friend and companion of George Fell, the heir of Swarthmoor. He had shared the young squire's diversions, his hunting, fishing, and shooting; he had also shared with him the instructions of a neighbouring clergyman, who was preparing the lads for college, and afterwards had gone with him to Hawkshead school. Now however that he had been so powerfully moved by the words of the Quaker apostle, his views of life changed. Not only fishing and shooting, but the composition of Latin verses were burdensome to his spirit, "because he could not any longer give his thoughts that liberty for invention which others did: neither could he any longer give the master of the school the compliment of his hat as he was used to do."[1] He renounced the hope of a University education; remained for some little time at Swarthmoor Hall as tutor and amanuensis to Margaret Fell; then went forth into England, Holland, and France as a missionary of the new doctrines; suffered the whippings, mob-beatings, and imprisonments which were the portion of a Quaker preacher in those days, and finally died at Amsterdam in 1665, in the thirtieth year of his age. He was probably about the best educated and most refined minister of the first generation of the Society of Friends.

Meantime, while these singular events were happening at Swarthmoor Hall, where was its master? Judge Fell was away upon the Welsh Circuit, and did not return till about three weeks after Fox's visit. On his

[1] Sewel, *History of Society of Friends*, i. 279 (Edition 1833).

return journey, he was met by several of the captains of Cromwell's army, and the chief gentry of the county. One can imagine them riding forth over the wide wet sands to tell the Judge the news of his great disaster. "Your wife and all your family are bewitched. They are all seduced from the Christian religion: and unless you can send away the men who have done this thing the whole county will be undone." With clouded brow, the usually good-tempered elderly man returned to his home; his poor wife feeling herself to be brought into a grievous strait, "that she must either displease her husband or offend God." Fox himself was not to arrive in the house till evening. Two other ministers, James Naylor and Richard Farnsworth, were brought in to speak to the Judge, which they did "moderately and nicely." He was at first greatly displeased with them, but at last accepted their assurances that they came only in love and good-will to his house. By this time "he was pretty moderate and quiet," says his wife, "and his dinner being ready he went to it, and I went in and sat me down by him." "And while I was sitting the power of the Lord seized upon me; and he was struck with amazement, and knew not what to think, but was quiet and still. And the children were all quiet and still, and grown sober, and could not play at their music that they were learning, and all these things made him quiet and still."

In the evening Fox arrived, and the dreaded interview passed off better than Margaret Fell had feared. A Yorkshire magistrate named Robinson had spoken highly in praise of George Fox to many Parliamentmen. Fell was relieved on finding that this was the man who now stood before him. The good word of

"Justice Hotham" also went for something, and in the end, after Fox had spoken at some length in defence of his new doctrine, Judge Fell quieted down and ceased to demand the instant departure of himself and his friends. He never actually joined the new sect; perhaps his official position made that seem almost impossible. But he seems to have been more than half convinced, and often said that he wished his colleague (who seems to have been also his patron) Judge Bradshaw could hear Fox's discourses. He willingly acquiesced in the meeting of the Friends being held in the dining-room of Swarthmoor Hall, and as we have seen, according to the tradition, often sat in his study with door ajar to hear the ministers' sermons; but as a rule he rode off alone, or accompanied only by his clerk and a groom, to the parish church at Ulverston. Much did "Priest Lampitt" and his friend "Justice Sawrey" chafe at seeing the once well filled pew of Swarthmoor Hall tenanted only by those three melancholy male figures.

The effect, however, which was produced on at least one unprejudiced observer by the sight of the family at Swarthmoor Hall under the changed conditions of their spiritual life, may be learned from the following letter, written by a magistrate named Anthony Pearson, who after joining in a prosecution of two of the Quaker ministers for blasphemy, became himself a Friend, and was one of the first to preach the new doctrines in the city of London. The letter is believed to be addressed to Colonel Benson, a brother magistrate, who had also from an opponent become a staunch supporter of "the Children of the Light":—

"Dear Friend,

"I have long professed to serve and worship the true God, and as I thought, above many attained to a high pitch in religion; but now alas! I find my work will not abide the fire. My notions were swelling vanities without power or life. What it was to love enemies, to bless them that curse, to render good for evil, to use the world as using it not, to lay down life for the brethren, I never understood: what purity and perfection meant I never tasted. All my religion was but from the hearing of the ear, the believing and talking of a God and Christ in heaven; or at a place at a distance I knew not where. Oh! how gracious was the Lord to me in carrying me to Judge Fell's, to see the wonders of His power and wisdom—a family walking in the fear of the Lord, conversing daily with Him, crucified to the world, and living only to God. I was so confounded, that all my knowledge and wisdom became as folly: my mouth was stopped, my conscience convinced, the secrets of my heart were made manifest, and the Lord was discovered to be near, whom I ignorantly worshipped. I could have talked of Christ, of the saints and the hope of glory, but it was all a riddle to me.

"Truly, dear friend, I must tell thee I have now lost all my religion, and am in such distress, I have no hope nor foundation left. My justification and assurance have forsaken me, and I am even like a poor shattered vessel tossed to and fro without a pilot or rudder—as blind, dead, and helpless as thou canst imagine.

* * * * * *

"What thou told me of George Fox I found true. When thou seest him or James Naylor (they both

know my condition better than myself), move them (if neither of them be drawn this way) to help me with their counsel by letter. They are full of pity and compassion, and though I was their enemy, they are my friends: and so is Francis Howgill, from whom I received a letter full of tenderness and wholesome advice.[1] Oh! how welcome would the faces of any of them be to me. Truly I think I could scorn the world, to have fellowship with them. But I find my heart is full of deceit, and I exceedingly fear to be beguiled, as I have been, and to be seduced into a form without power, into a profession before I possess the truth: which would but multiply my misery, and deprive me both of God and the world.

* * * * * *

"I am afraid lest the orders we made at Appleby cause some to suffer, who speak from the mouth of the Lord: I heartily wish they were suppressed or recalled.

"I have seen at Judge Fell's, and have been informed from that precious soul his consort, in some measure what these things mean, which before I counted the overflowings of giddy brains. Dear heart, pity and pray for me: and let all obligations of former friendship be discharged in well wishes to the soul of the old family friend, that he may partake with them of heavenly possessions."[2]

[1] Naylor and Howgill were the two ministers whom Pearson had assisted in prosecuting for blasphemy.

[2] I am indebted to Mrs. Webb's *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall* for the reference to this letter, which is in the Swarthmoor collection of MSS. at Devonshire House.

Whatever may be thought of some of George Fox's utterances, it is clear from such letters as this that his message was one which stirred the souls of men to their very depths, calling forth in some enthusiastic and eager acceptance, while it roused others to the bitterest opposition.

CHAPTER VII

AT LANCASTER AND CARLISLE

After the halcyon days which Fox and his companions spent under the hospitable roof of Swarthmoor Hall, came beatings and buffetings, and the strange and somewhat obscure episode of his trial for blasphemy at Lancaster Quarter Sessions.

In August 1650, Parliament had passed an Act called the Blasphemy Act, for the punishment of atheistical, blasphemous, and execrable opinions. This Act, says the historian of the Commonwealth,[1] had none of the inquisitorial character which attached to the monstrous blasphemy ordinance of 1648. It meted out six months' imprisonment for the first offence, and banishment, with prohibition of return on pain of death, for the second, and that in two cases only—the affirming that any human being was God, or a manifestation of God, and the affirming that acts of gross immorality "were indifferent or even positively religious." The second clause was aimed at some of the extreme party among the Ranters. It was apparently under the first that George Fox was called to stand in the dock at Lancaster Quarter Sessions.

[1] Gardiner, i. 395.

To us Europeans of the nineteenth century, it is almost inconceivable that an Act of Parliament should ever have seemed to be necessary in order to prevent men from giving themselves out as manifestations of the Godhead. The Creator seems so unimaginably great, and man so miserably little, that to us the serpent's voice, "Ye shall be as gods," whispers an unintelligible temptation. Yet even in our own day, in Eastern lands, multitudes of men have been willing to suffer imprisonment, confiscation of their goods, even death itself, in testimony of their faith in a man of holy life, whom they regarded as "the Gate of the Godhead."[1] In England, in the seventeenth century, there was not perhaps the Oriental willingness to accept on slight proof the theory of an Incarnation, but in the fervid, highly exalted state of men's minds, steeped in Bible language and Bible imagery, there seems to have been at least a disposition in some quarters to anticipate the coming of a new Messiah.

Did George Fox for himself set up any such claim of Messiahship? It seems to me clear, that never, even in his most exalted and enthusiastic moments, did he use language which could fairly subject him to such a charge. A mystic, it is true, if ever there was one, he realized with startling vividness the nearness of Christ to the human soul. The words, "Christ *in you*, the hope of glory," were the keynote of all his teaching. He thought (sometimes no doubt unjustly) that the clergy of the day were preaching a dead, or at any rate a far-off and shadowy Christ, a Christ outside the world

[1] See the very extraordinary *Episode of the Bab*, translated from the Persian by my friend Edward G. Browne. (Cambridge, 1891.)

of men and the human soul, and therefore he repeated with what seemed to unsympathizing ears a monotonous energy, "Christ is in you: the Word is very nigh thee, in thy heart and in thy mouth." But in all these utterances of his he was only in line with one of the earliest Christian martyrs, with Ignatius, whose favourite name for himself was Theophoros, the God-bearer. He fell short, we may venture to say, of St. Francis, with his vision of the divinely imprinted stigmata; of St. Theresa, with her amorous yearnings after the heavenly spouse. He expressed in ruder and harsher language some of the thoughts which have made the *De Imitatione Christi* for more than four centuries the delight of Christendom.

But though Fox's own record seems to be clear from anything amounting to a claim to Messiahship, it is not so certain that his disciples, in the first fervour of their conversion, were equally moderate in their language. The two converted magistrates, Benson and Pearson, even in protesting against his imprisonment for blasphemy, use such words as these—"Christ is now preached in and among the saints, the same that ever He was: *and because His heavenly image is borne up in this His faithful servant*, therefore doth fallen man, rulers, priests, and people, persecute him. *Because he lives up out of the fall*, and testifies against the works of the world that the deeds thereof are evil, he suffers by you magistrates, not as an evil-doer." The words here used are susceptible of an orthodox interpretation, but they would startle and alarm the ordinary Presbyterian minister.

Moreover, it must in fairness be stated that there exists among the Swarthmoor manuscripts a letter

addressed by the little family church at Swarthmoor to George Fox, in the first fervour of their conversion, in which they use language so high-flown and rhapsodical, that it could not properly be addressed to any but a Divine Saviour. It is not fair to charge Fox himself with the responsibility for this paper, which he may have utterly condemned; but the fact that it was ever written shows what excited brains there were in a quiet English country house in the year 1652.

Whatever the cause might be, and whether the report were maliciously spread abroad by Lampitt and Sawrey[1] or not, the belief was evidently widely entertained in North Lancashire that George Fox was a blasphemer. It is to this, doubtless, that we must attribute the extraordinary violence of an attack which was made upon him in Ulverston church. It was a "lecture day," and there was a large congregation of "professors, priests, and people." "I went up," says he, "near to priest Lampitt, who was blustering on in his preaching, and after the Lord had opened my mouth to speak, John Sawrey the justice came to me and said, 'If I would speak according to the Scriptures, I should speak.'" There was a little altercation on this point between the preacher and the magistrate, who in the end commanded him to keep silence, and as Fox still persisted, and was apparently heard by the audience with favour, "Justice Sawrey (who was the first stirrer up of cruel persecution in the North) incensed them against me, and set them on to hale, beat, and bruise me." Fox was knocked down, kicked, and trampled upon; there was a scene of wild uproar in the church, and some of the congregation fell over the

[1] This is George Fox's account of the matter.

forms in their panic-stricken flight. At last Sawrey succeeded in getting Fox out of the church, and given in charge to the constables, who were ordered to whip him and put him out of the town. Some of the inhabitants who seemed disposed to take his part had their heads broken, and the young squire of Swarthmoor, who came running after the constables to see what they would do with his mother's guest, was thrown into a ditch amid the cries of "Knock the teeth out of his head."

As for Fox, having been beaten till he fainted, he lay for some time in a swamp, with the mob standing round him. When his senses returned, he "stood up again in the strengthening power of the Eternal God"; and stretching out his arms, said with a loud voice, "Strike again; here are my arms, my head, and my cheeks." Hereupon a devout mason struck a blow with all his might with his "walking rule-staff" on the outstretched hand of the heretic. The blow was so severe that both Fox and the bystanders thought at first he had lost the use of his hand for ever. "But I looked at it in the love of God (for I was in the love of God to them all that had persecuted me), and after a while the Lord's power sprung through me again, and through my hand and arm, so that in a moment I recovered strength in my hand and arm in the sight of them all."

Several more scenes of the same kind followed, both in the neighbourhood of Ulverston, and in the little island of Walney, which skirts the western coast of Furness. They were all evidently part, a lawless part, of the campaign which had been commenced by the Puritan ministers and magistrates against Fox as a

blasphemer. The legal side of the same campaign was represented by proceedings taken to bring him to trial at the Quarter Sessions at Lancaster, in October 1652. A warrant was issued for his apprehension, but just at this time Judge Fell, whose absence on circuit had emboldened Fox's enemies to persecute him as they had done, returned home. The warrant was not served, and he, on the other hand, issued warrants for the apprehension of some of the more atrocious rioters in the Isle of Walney. He was willing to go further, and asked Fox to give him an account of the whole persecution, but he answered, "that those men could do no otherwise in the spirit in which they were, and that they manifested the fruits of their priest's ministry and their profession and religion to be wrong. So he told his wife that I made light of it, and that I spoke of it as a man that had not been concerned: for indeed the Lord's power healed me again."

When the time for the Quarter Sessions had arrived, Fox, though the warrant had not been served upon him, determined to attend at the court. The brave and kindly Judge went with him, sorely perplexed in his legal mind what line to take, for he had never before had a charge of blasphemy brought before him. Fox reminded him of the wise neutrality of Festus, when Paul was brought before him on a similar charge, and Judge Fell seems to have followed the precedent. When they had reached the Lancaster Court House, there were forty fervid ministers, who had "chosen a Lancaster clergyman, named Marshall, to be their orator," and had provided one young priest and two young priest's sons to bear witness against Fox, and who had previously made affidavit that he had spoken blasphemy.

The witnesses, however, entirely broke down, nor could all the help rendered them by their orator Marshall, sitting by and explaining their sayings for them, save their credit. Each one relied in a helpless way on the other, and at length the magistrates were obliged to reprimand them for having solemnly made affidavit that they heard certain blasphemous words which, as it now appeared, they only reported on hearsay from others.

On the other side was a considerable body of men "of integrity and reputation in the country," who had been present at the meeting in question, and who gave evidence that the blasphemous words complained of were never used. The charge was evidently about to fail, and one of the magistrates, Colonel West, who vigorously espoused Fox's cause, turned to him and said, "George, if thou hast anything to say to the people thou mayest declare it." Orator Marshall left the building, and Lancaster Court House was turned for the time into a Quakers' Meeting-house. From the tenor of the discourse which followed, it is evident that the charge of blasphemy must have chiefly rested on some alleged attack on the authority of the Bible. What Fox believed himself moved of the Lord to declare was that "the Holy Scriptures were given forth by the Spirit of God, and that all people must come to the same Spirit, and have Him dwelling in their hearts: since without Him they could have neither God nor Christ, nor the Scriptures, nor have right fellowship with one another." At this six ministers who stood behind him broke out into a passion, and one of them named Jackus declared that the Spirit and the letter [of the Scriptures] were inseparable. Fox replied,

"Then every one that hath the letter hath the Spirit, and every one who buys a copy of the Bible buys the Spirit with it." The falseness of the position taken up by the extreme Bibliolaters was perceived by some of the magistrates, and Judge Fell and Colonel West "reproved them openly, telling them that according to that position they might carry the Spirit in their pockets as they did the Scriptures." On this the clergy all left the Court House much exasperated against the magistrates, and George Fox was discharged.

On the whole case, though we must be cautious in forming conclusions from an *ex parte* statement, it would seem that the proceedings at Lancaster resulted in a triumphant vindication of George Fox from the charge of blasphemy. This seems proved, not only by his formal discharge, but by the fact that Colonel West and Gervase Benson, both magistrates, Major Ripan, Mayor of Lancaster, and several other men of good social position and high religious character, dated their "convincement" of the principles of Quakerism from this day. It is not necessary to accuse the forty Puritan ministers of having deliberately suborned false witnesses against their enemy. Many of them, like Lampitt, were sore at seeing their congregations drawn away from them by these new and illiterate preachers. There was much in the new style of preaching which would have seemed "hard sayings" to any age, but which especially jarred on ears accustomed to the prim, pedantic, text-splitting style of discourse dear to the Puritan lecturer. In these circumstances, and with their spirits all aflame with the clamour of the multitude round them, it was easy to misunderstand the somewhat rhapsodical utterances of Fox, and uninten-

tionally to exaggerate their strangeness. At any rate, the opponents of the new doctrine were not minded quietly to accept their defeat, which they no doubt attributed to the preponderating influence of Judge Fell. It was probably towards the end of 1652, or in the early part of 1653, that there was presented "to the Right Honourable the Council of State" [sitting at Whitehall] "the humble petition of several Gentlemen, Justices of Peace, Ministers of the Gospel, and People within the County of Lancaster." This Petition averred as follows:—

"That George Fox and James Naylor are persons disaffected to Religion and the wholesome Laws of this Nation: and that since their coming into this County they have broached Opinions tending to the destruction of the relation of Subjects to their Magistrates, Wives to their Husbands, Children to their Parents, Servants to their Masters, Congregations to their Ministers, and of a People to their God. And have drawn much people after them: many whereof (men, women, and little children) at their meetings are strangely wrought upon in their bodies, and brought to fall, foam at the mouth, roar and swell in their bellies. And that some of them affirmed themselves to be equal with God, contrary to the late Act, as hath been attested at a late Quarter Sessions holden at Lancaster in October last past: and since that time acknowledged before many witnesses; besides many other dangerous Opinions and damnable Heresies, as appears by a Schedule hereunto annexed, with the names of the witnesses subscribed."

The Schedule is to this effect:—

"1. George professed and averred that he was equal with God.

2. He professed himself to be the eternal Judge of the world.

3. He said he was the Judge of the world.

4. He said he was the Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

5. He said, Whosoever took a place of Scripture and made a sermon of it and from it was a conjurer and his preaching conjuration.

6. He said that the Scripture was carnal."

There were other charges of a similar kind brought against James Milner, Leonard Fell, and Richard Hubberthorn, which need not be quoted here, as our business is with Fox alone.[1]

It does not appear that any action was taken by the Council of State in reply to this petition, but the presentation of it led to a curious reply, to which we are indebted for our knowledge of the petition itself. This reply is entitled (according to the fashion of the voluminous title-pages of that age)—

[1] It is curious, however, to note the charge against Milner. "He professeth himself to be God and Christ, and gives out prophecies.

"1. That the day of Judgment shall be the 15th day of November [? 1653].

2. That there shall never Judge sit at Lancaster again.

3. That he must ere long shake the foundations of the great Synagogue, meaning the Parliament."

Milner, like Naylor, was evidently in a very excited state, and broke away for a time from the fellowship of the Friends. George Fox says (*Journal*, I. 158), "About this time [early in 1653] I was in a fast for about ten days, my spirit being greatly exercised on truth's account: for James Milner and Richard Myer went out into imaginations, and a company followed them. This James Milner and some of his company had true openings at first; but getting into pride and exaltation of spirit, they ran out from truth. I was moved of the Lord to go and show them their outgoings, and they were brought to see their folly, and condemned it, and came into the way of truth again."

"Saul's Errand to Damascus with his packet of letters from the High priests against the disciples of the Lord, or a faithful Transcript of a Petition contrived by some persons in Lancashire who call themselves Ministers of the Gospel, breathing out threatenings and slaughters against a peaceable and godly people there by them nicknamed Quakers, together with the defence of the persons thereby traduced against the slanderous and false suggestions of that Petition and other untruths charged against them. Published to no other end but to draw out the bowels of tender compassion from all that love the poor, despised servants of Jesus Christ, who have been the scorn of carnal men in all ages."[1]

The pamphlet begins thus—

"CHRISTIAN READER:

"These are to let thee know that the only wise God at this time hath so by His providence ordered it in the north parts of Lancashire that many precious Christians (and so for many years accounted before the nickname Quakers was heard of) have for some time past forborne to concorporate in Parochial Assemblies, wherein they profess themselves to have gained little of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And it is and hath been put upon their hearts to meet often (and on the Lord's Day constantly) at convenient places to seek the Lord their Redeemer, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and to speak of such things (leading to mutual edification) as the good spirit of the Lord shall

[1] Then follow verses 10-13 of chapter V. of Matthew. "London: printed for Giles Calvert at the Black Spread Eagle at the West End of Pauls 1653." (Press mark in British Museum, E. $\frac{688}{17}$.)

teach them, demeaning themselves without any offence given to any that truely fear the Lord."

After reciting the charges brought against Friends in the Lancashire petition, the authors of the pamphlet proceed to clear themselves from the charges of disaffection to the Government, and dissemination of doctrines destructive of family peace. As for the hysterical symptoms (as we should call them) said to accompany their worship, the meetings of the People of God are, say they, ever strange to the world. They quote Acts x. 44, Daniel x. 9, Habakkuk iii. 16, Isaiah lxvi. 5, and Joel ii. 6, for the manifestation of symptoms similar to those complained of in the petition; and say, "The Prophets and Ministers of God who had all one spirit, according to measure, did all encourage those that tremble." Of the specific charges against Fox, the first four are all replied to by texts from the New Testament, which speak of the mystical union of Christ and His followers, the saints judging the world, and so forth. As to the fifth charge, of "conjuring from Scripture," the pamphlet replies—

"He that puts the Letter for the Light, when the Letter says that Christ is the Light, he is blind; and they that say the Letter and the Spirit are inseparable, when the Spirit saith the Letter is death and killeth, and all that do study to raise a living thing out of a dead, to raise the Spirit out of the Letter, are conjurers, and draw points and reasons, and so speak a divination of their own brain: they are conjurers and diviners, and their teaching is from conjuration, which is not spoken from the mouth of the Lord, and the Lord is against all such . . . for that doctrine doth not profit at all, for it stands not in the counsel of God, but is a

doctrine of the devil, and draws people from God; but he that speaks from the mouth of the Lord turns people from their wickedness."

The answer to the sixth charge, "The Scripture is carnal," goes on similar lines. "The Letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life. I witness that which is Eternal and not Carnal. The Jews which had the Letter persecuted Jesus Christ the Substance, and so do you now which have the Letter and not the Substance. There were ministers of the Letter then, and ministers of the Spirit: so are there now."

"All the plotting of the Priests is and ever was against Christ when He is made manifest, and the Beast shall make war with the Saints and with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall get the victory: praises, praises be to our God for ever, for ever more."

The reader who has studied the history of sects or churches will know how important it is to listen to what is said by the opponents, as well as by the advocates of the new doctrine. Would that we possessed anything like as full a body of polemical literature against the early Christians, as that which the printing press has preserved for us, directed against the early Quakers. It is with this view that I have ventured to make such copious extracts from *Saul's Errand to Damascus*.

For some months after Fox's trial at Lancaster, he travelled about through the north-western counties, Cumberland, Westmoreland, North Lancashire, making Swarthmoor Hall his base of operations, to which he returned, and from which he sent forth his written denunciations against Lampitt, Sawrey, and others of the "magistrates, priests, and professors," who had taken

part in the persecution of the Friends. It must have been somewhere about April 10[1] that he was sitting at Swarthmoor, listening to Judge Fell and Gervase Benson talking over politics. Their discourse naturally turned on the Long Parliament, or the Rump as it was irreverently styled—a body of which we must suppose Judge Fell to have been still in theory a member, though we always hear of him in Lancashire, not in London. Then Fox, who believed he had an "opening from the Lord," was moved to tell them that before that day two weeks the Parliament should be dissolved, and the Speaker plucked out of his chair. A fortnight passed. Benson was again at Swarthmoor, and told his friend that now he saw George was a true prophet, for Oliver had broken up the Parliament.

A characteristic passage follows—"Now were great threatenings given forth in Cumberland, that if ever I came there again, they would take away my life. When I heard it, I was drawn to go into Cumberland, and went to the same parish from which those threatenings came, but they had not power to touch me." He visited Bootle, where he sustained his usual violent treatment from the mob, his wrist being nearly broken from one rough fellow's blow. In the afternoon he went to the church, where the minister, a stranger from London, "gathered up all the Scriptures he could think of that spoke of false prophets and antichrists and deceivers, and threw them upon us; but when he had done I re-collected all those Scriptures, and brought them back upon himself. Then the people fell upon me in a rude manner;

[1] Cromwell's dissolution of the Long Parliament took place on April 20. News of that event could hardly reach Furness till the 24th. Dating back a fortnight we get to April 10.

but the constable charged them to keep the peace, and so made them quiet again. Then the priest began to rage and said I must not speak there. I told him he had his hour-glass by which he preached, and he having done, the time was free for me as well as for him, for he was but a stranger there himself. So I opened the Scriptures to them, and let them see that those Scriptures that spoke of the false prophets and antichrists and deceivers described them and their generation, and not us, who were not guilty of such things."

At Cockermouth he found a great company of people gathered together in the churchyard to hear him. One of his disciples, who had been sent forward to prepare the way, was speaking under a yew-tree, which was so full of people that Fox feared they would break it down. He looked about for a place to stand upon to speak to the people, "for they lay all up and down like people at a leaguer," an expression which suggests that Fox had looked upon some of the besieging armies during the recent Civil War. As soon as Fox was recognized, he was asked if he would go into the church, an offer which he accepted, seeing no place in the churchyard from which he could conveniently address the people. Thereupon all the people rushed in, filling the house and even the pulpit, so that he had much ado to get in. As soon as the congregation was settled, he stood upon a seat, and began a discourse which lasted three hours. It will be worth while to read his summary of this discourse, as from it we may infer the purport of many similar ones.

"The Lord opened my mouth to declare His everlasting truth and His everlasting day: and to lay open all their teachers, their rudiments, traditions, and

inventions that they had been in, in the night of apostacy since the apostles' days. I turned them to Christ the true teacher, and to the true spiritual worship: directing them where to find the Spirit and truth, that they might worship God therein. I opened Christ's parables unto them, and directed them to the Spirit of God in themselves, that would open the Scriptures unto them. And I showed them how all might come to know their Saviour and sit under His teaching, might come to be the heirs of the kingdom of God, and know both the voice of God and of Christ, by which they might discover all the false shepherds and teachers they had been under, and be gathered to the true shepherd, priest, bishop, and prophet, Christ Jesus, whom God commanded all to hear. So when I had largely declared the word of life unto them for about three hours, I walked from amongst the people, and they passed away very well satisfied."

It is evident that Fox's preaching was at this time a great power in the north of England, and that the tide of Quakerism was rising high, especially in Cumberland, a county in which it has been calculated that something like half the population became "Friends." I extract one or two paragraphs from the *Journal*, in which he describes the events of this time.

"Amongst the rest a professor followed me, praising and commending me, but his words were like a thistle to me. At last I turned about and bid him fear the Lord, whereupon priest Larkham of Cockermouth (for several priests were got together on the way who came after the meeting was over) said to me, 'Sir, why do you judge so? You must not judge.' But I turned to him and said, 'Friend, dost not thou discern an

exhortation from a judgment? I admonished him to fear God: and dost thou say I judge him?' So the priest and I falling into discourse, I manifested him to be among the false prophets and covetous hirelings. And several people being moved to speak to him, he and two others of the priests soon got away. . . . Many hundreds were convinced that day, and received the Lord Jesus Christ and His free teaching with gladness, of whom some have died in the truth, and many stand faithful witnesses thereof. The soldiers [twelve soldiers and their wives who had come to Cockermouth from Carlisle] were also convinced, and their wives, and continued with me till First-day."

There was again a similar meeting at the neighbouring village of Brigham. "A fine opportunity the Lord gave me to preach truth among the people, for about three hours, and all was quiet. Many hundreds were convinced: and some of them praised God, and said, 'Now we have the first step to peace.' The preacher also said privately to some of his hearers that I had broken them and overthrown them."

Fox then passed on into a neighbouring village, where he astonished the people by speaking sharply to a woman and telling her that she was a witch, whereupon she went out of the room. "Now I being a stranger there, and knowing nothing of the woman outwardly, the people wondered at it, and told me afterwards that I had discovered a great thing, for all the country looked upon her to be a witch."

"From Caldbeck we came to Carlisle, and the pastor of the Baptists, with most of his hearers, came to me to the abbey, where I had a meeting, and many of the Baptists and of the soldiers were convinced. After the

meeting the pastor of the Baptists, a high notionist and a flashy man, came to me and asked me, 'What must be damned?' I was moved immediately to tell him, 'That which spoke in him was to be damned.' This stopped his mouth, and the witness of God was raised up in him. I opened to him the states of election and reprobation, so that he said he never heard the like in his life. He also came to be convinced."

Fox then went up to the Castle, where the soldiers, assembled by beat of drum, heard him give a discourse such as that which John the Baptist gave to the soldiers of Herod. Then to the market-cross, where in spite of magistrates and magistrates' wives, the latter of whom had threatened that if he came thither they would pluck the hair off his head, he preached a sermon to the people, telling them, "that the day of the Lord was coming upon all their deceitful ways and doings, and deceitful merchandize; and that they should put away all cozening and cheating, and keep to Yea and Nay, and speak the truth one to another; so the truth and the power of God was set over them."

On the next Sunday, Fox went to the church (probably the cathedral), and after the minister had ended his sermon, preached one of his own which stirred the enthusiasm of some, and the rage of others. There was evidently a tumult in the church. "The magistrates' wives were in a rage and strove mightily to be at me; but the soldiers and friendly people stood thick about me. At length the rude people of the city rose, and came with staves and stones into the steeple-house, crying, 'Down with these round-headed rogues,' and they threw stones, whereupon the governor sent a file or two of musketeers into the steeple-house to appease

the tumult, and commanded all the other soldiers out. So these soldiers took me by the hand in a friendly manner, and said they would have me along with them. When we came forth into the street, the city was in an uproar, and the governor came down, and some of those soldiers were put in prison for standing by me and for me against the townspeople. A lieutenant that had been convinced came and brought me to his house, where there was a Baptists' meeting, and thither came Friends also, and we had a very quiet meeting: they heard the word of life gladly, and many received it."

At Carlisle, and probably in some other places, the Baptists appear to have been more disposed to tolerate Fox's preaching than either of the other two great Puritan sects. He tells us expressly that the magistrates who took part in the following proceedings against him, and probably also the magistrates' wives who threatened to pluck the hair off his head, were Independents and Presbyterians.

On the day after the uproar in the church, these magistrates met together in the town-hall and granted a warrant for Fox's apprehension on a charge of blasphemy. He tells us that many of the rude people had sworn strange, false things against him, but gives us no more precise information as to the nature of the charge, and we must therefore fill up the outline for ourselves by analogy from the similar proceedings at Lancaster.

Under the magistrates' warrant, Fox was committed to prison at Carlisle "as a blasphemer, a heretic, and a seducer, though they could not justly charge any such thing against me. The gaol at Carlisle had two gaolers, an upper and an under, who looked like two great bear-

wards. Now when I was brought in, the upper gaoler had me into a great chamber and told me I should have what I would in that room. But I told him he should not expect any money from me, for I would neither lie in any of his beds nor eat any of his victuals. Then he put me into another room, where after a while I got something to lie upon. There I lay till the assizes came, and then all the talk was that I was to be hanged. The high sheriff, whose name was Wilfred Lawson,[1] stirred them much up to take away my life, and said he would guard me to my execution himself. They were in a great rage, and set three musketeers for a guard upon me, one at my chamber-door, another at the stair's-foot, and a third at the street-door, and they would let none come at me except one sometimes to bring me necessary things. At night they would bring up priests to me, sometimes as late as the tenth hour, who were exceedingly rude and devilish. There was a company of bitter Scotch priests, Presbyterians, made up of envy and malice, who were not fit to speak of the things of God, they were so foul-mouthed; but the Lord by His power gave me dominion over them all, and I let them see both their feints and their spirits. Great ladies also (as they were called) came to see the man that they said was to die. Now, while both the judge, justices, and sheriff were contriving together how they might put me to death, the Lord disappointed their design by an unexpected way, for the judge's clerk (as I was informed) started a question among them which confounded all their counsels; so that after that they had not power to call me before the judge."

[1] A name well known at Carlisle in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

It is not very easy to understand the course of the legal proceedings in Fox's case. It is plain that for some reason the commitment on the grave charge of blasphemy, a capital offence under the recent Act, was bad, and that the judges of assize, on that ground, refused to try the case. There must have been, however, some lighter charge, probably that of brawling in church, which the local magistrates were compelled to deal with, and on which he was detained in prison apparently for some weeks. His friend and convert, Anthony Pearson, who was himself a justice of the peace, wrote a letter to the Judges of Assize complaining that neither he nor Fox could get a sight of the information preferred against him. "This is very hard; and that he should be so closely restrained that his friends may not speak with him, I know no law nor reason for. I do therefore claim for him a due and lawful hearing, and that he may have a copy of his charge, and freedom to answer for himself; and that rather before you than to be left to the rulers of this town, who are not competent judges of blasphemy, as by their *mittimus* appears: who have committed him upon an Act of Parliament, and mention words as spoken by him at this examination which are not within the Act, and which he utterly denies. The words mentioned in the *mittimus* he denies to have spoken, and hath neither professed nor avowed them."

Notwithstanding this letter, Fox says, the judges were resolved not to suffer him to be brought before them (that is, probably they decided that they had no power to try the case), but, reviling and scoffing at him behind his back, left him to the magistrates of the

town, giving them what encouragement they could to exercise their cruelty upon him.

Whatever the precise form may have been, which was taken by the legal process against him, the result is certain. Fox was kept for a considerable time in the dungeon of Carlisle, which seems to have been a bad specimen even of the foul English prisons of that age. The sanitary arrangements were detestable, vermin swarmed, and men and women were crowded together with little regard for decency. After the many attempts of poets and ballad-writers to glorify the "bold moss-trooping Scot," it is startling to hear the moss-troopers classed with thieves and murderers, among the worst occupants of the dungeon. The sight of these men so impressed Fox, that in a letter which he wrote from the dungeon to two magistrates who were especially busy in punishing Friends for the non-payment of tithes, he says that the priests behaved "more like moss-troopers than ministers of the gospel." The gaoler was very cruel, and the under-gaoler used, with a great cudgel, to beat the Friends who came to the grating of the window to converse with their suffering teacher, or Fox himself, when he carried his food to the grating, and tried to take his meal in a less pestilential air than he usually breathed. "One time," says Fox, "he came in a great rage and beat me with a great cudgel, though I was not at the grate at that time, and as he beat me, he cried, 'Come out of the window,' though I was then far enough from it. While he struck me, I was made to sing in the Lord's power, and that made him rage the more. Then he fetched a fiddler, and brought him in where I was, and set him to play, thinking to vex me thereby; but while he played, I

was moved in the everlasting power of the Lord to sing, and my voice drowned the noise of the fiddle, and struck and confounded them, and made them give over fiddling and go their way."

While Fox was still in this dungeon, the rumour that there was a young man in Carlisle gaol about to die for religion reached Westminster, where the Little Parliament, or to quote its more opprobrious name, the "Barebones" Parliament, was then sitting. This assembly, which was one of the most revolutionary in matters ecclesiastical that the country has ever seen, decided to interfere, and prevent so great a scandal; and sent a letter to the sheriff and magistrates of Carlisle, probably recommending caution and clemency. As we have seen, the prosecution on the capital charge had already broken down, but the letter from the High Court of Parliament probably assisted the earnest endeavours of the Quaker magistrates Pearson and Benson for the release of their wrongfully accused friend. Fox was liberated, and Anthony Pearson, bringing the abuses of the prison under the notice of the "governor," obtained a vote of censure on the magistrates for allowing such barbarities to be committed. The other gaolers were required to find sureties for their good behaviour, and the exceptionally cruel under-gaoler, who had beaten Fox with the cudgel, was himself confined in the dungeon "amongst the moss-troopers."

CHAPTER VIII

AT FENNY DRAYTON AND WHITEHALL

1654. After Fox was liberated from his imprisonment at Carlisle, he travelled through Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, meeting with his usual strangely varied tissue of adventures. In one place a company of butchers, who had sworn that they would have his blood, came to an open-air meeting, and stood yelling as if it had been a bear-garden. But their threats of bodily injury came to nothing, and when asked by their neighbours why they had not killed him according to their oath, they could only answer that he had so bewitched them that they could not do it. Undoubtedly there was something in the very appearance of this tall, grave, fearless man which laid a very powerful spell on meaner spirits. When he was at Carlisle, a Baptist deacon, "an envious man," says Fox, finding the Lord's power was over them, cried out for very anger. "Whereupon I set my eyes upon him, and spoke sharply to him in the power of the Lord: and he cried, 'Do not pierce me so with thy eyes: keep thy eyes off me.'"

In Lincolnshire he held a meeting at which the sheriff of the county, Robert Craven, was present. He came with a large party of his friends to argue and denounce, but he was struck by the power of Fox's

preaching, became "convinced of the truth," and joined the new Society. So did "she who was called the Lady Montague," Sir Richard Wrey, and some other members of the county aristocracy.

He passed on into his native county of Leicester, and had a great meeting, to which came many "Baptists, Ranters, and other professors, who were very rude and stirred up the rude people against us." "We sent to the Ranters to come forth and try their God. Abundance of them came, who were very rude, and sang and whistled and danced: but the Lord's power so confounded them that many of them came to be convinced."

And now at length, after an absence of three years, George Fox returned to his native place, in order to visit his relations. Not much family intercourse, however, seems to have been the result of this visit to Fenny Drayton. At once his old antagonist, "Priest Stephens," having obtained the help of another clergyman, challenged Fox to a discussion, the report of which brought the whole countryside together. Fox was for carrying on the discussion in the churchyard; the two clergymen insisted on his coming into the church, averring that "Mr. Stephens could not bear the cold." In the end the dispute was settled by their adjourning to "a great hall," doubtless the old manor-house of the Purefoys. The discussion turned that day on the right of the clergy to tithes, evidently a favourite subject with Stephens, and one upon which, four years later, he wrote a ponderous treatise. The debate ran on the well-known lines. Stephens no doubt pleaded the Mosaic ordinance; Fox appealed to the Epistle to the Hebrews, in proof that the tithe-receiving priesthood was ended by Christ. There was

some disturbance among the audience, whom the two clergymen, according to Fox, "stirred up to be vain and rude." At last Stephens said, "Neighbours, this is the business: George Fox is come to the light of the sun, and now he thinks to put out my starlight." Fox answered, "I would not quench the least measure of God in any, much less put out his starlight, if it were true starlight, light from the morning star. But I told him if he had anything from Christ or God, he ought to speak it freely, and not take tithes from the people for preaching, seeing Christ commanded His ministers to give freely as they had received freely. So I charged him to preach no more for tithes or any hire." The disturbance among the audience increased, and the conference broke up, George Fox informing them that he intended to be in the town on that day week.

The week was spent in meetings in the surrounding country, and when it was over, Stephens, who understood Fox's words as fixing an adjournment of the debate, had given notice at a neighbouring market, that on such a day there would be a debate between him and the Quakers. Seven clergymen had come to help him, and several hundreds of people were assembled to hear the discussion. Fox, though he did not consider himself pledged to a resumption of the debate, had with him a former clergyman named Taylor, the young Quaker preacher James Parnell, and several other Friends. He again refused to go into the church, but apparently went to the top of a little mound in the churchyard, and from thence spoke to the people. The crowd again became disorderly, and the conference was broken up into a number of little knots of people, in the centre of each of which were to be found a clergyman

and a Friend disputing. At last one of the clergymen brought his son to debate with Fox, but the young man, getting the worst of the argument, called on his father for help, and called in vain. Tired and thirsty with the long, vain wrangle, the eight clergymen at length adjourned to the parsonage for a drink, while Fox shouted after them that he had never beaten so many priests in argument before. At that some of the clergy and their wives came round him, patted him on the back, and said "fawningly," "What might he not have been, if it had not been for the Quakers."

While the clergy were in the parsonage, the yokels began their horseplay. Several lusty fellows took Fox up in their arms, and bore him into the church porch, intending to carry him into the church by force, but as the door was locked, they fell down in a heap, having him below them. He crept out from under them, and went back to his vantage ground of the mound; he was carried thence, however, and placed on a footstool under the wall of the church. By this time the clergy had returned from the parsonage, and called out, "Come, to argument, to argument." Fox began his argument by declaring that they were not true shepherds, but hirelings, such as Christ spoke of in the tenth chapter of John. On this he was knocked off his perch, while the eight clergymen stood each on his footstool under the church wall. Now thoroughly aroused, Fox declared that he "denied" those eight priests or teachers that stood before him, and all the hireling teachers of the world whatsoever; and then out of his retentive memory he thundered forth the long roll of passages from the Prophets, in which woe is denounced on the false prophets, and from the Gospels, in which Christ

denounced a similar woe on the Scribes and Pharisees. Then he went on to speak of his favourite theme, the light of Jesus Christ in the heart, till at length one of the audience cried out, "George, wilt thou never have done?" He answered that he would have done shortly, and when he had soon made an end, clergy and people all stood silent for a time, till at last one of the clergymen said that they would read the Scriptures he had quoted. They began to read aloud the twenty-third of Jeremiah, but Fox broke out into fresh objurgations, and the meeting at last seems to have broken up in confusion. At the end of it Stephens came, and desired Fox with his father and brother to come aside and speak with him in private. For some unexplained reason Fox was very reluctant to do so, but the people cried, "Go, George; do, George, go aside with him;" and as Fox's father added his entreaties he went, not wishing to seem disobedient to his parents.

The object of the private interview was that Stephens might say, "Pray for me if I am out of the way, and I will pray for you if you are out of the way. I will give you a form of words for the purpose." The good man, earnest if somewhat narrow, seems to have been really anxious to find some common spiritual standing ground with the young enthusiast, his parishioner. We read with regret Fox's utterly unsympathetic and self-confident answer, "It seems thou dost not know whether thou art in the right way or not; but I know that I am in the everlasting way, Christ Jesus, which thou art out of." And then he raised a laugh against Stephens by pointing out that he who objected to the Book of Common Prayer was himself proposing to give him a form of prayer, and so they parted, Fox announc-

ing that he intended to be in the town again that day week. "So the priests packed away, and many people were convinced; for the Lord's power came over all. Though they thought to have confounded truth that day, many were convinced of it, and many that were convinced before were by that day's work confirmed in the truth, and abode in it; and a great shake it gave to the priests. My father, though he was a hearer and follower of the priest, was so well satisfied, that he struck his cane upon the ground and said, 'Truly I see he that will but stand to the truth, it will carry him out.'" This is, I believe, the last mention that we have of "Righteous Christer," who evidently did not join the Society founded by his son, but who remained staunch in his persuasion of the truth and trustworthiness of his son's "Verily."

The third conference at Fenny Drayton, a meeting "at my relations' house," seems to have been a failure. Some soldiers were brought thither by the clergy, to take down the names of the attenders, and to arrest such as should not obey their command to disperse and go home. When Fox's name was taken, his relatives answered naturally enough, that as he was at home already he could not go home; and thus the clumsy device (if it were ever really entertained) for compassing Fox's imprisonment came to nought.

Soon, however, Fox was arrested and temporarily imprisoned on an entirely different charge from that which Stephens and his brother ministers would have preferred against him. In the course of his journeyings he came to Whetstone in Leicestershire, and there he was about to hold a meeting which seems to have been a kind of conference for the Friends of all the surround-

ing district.[1] To this meeting came about seventeen troopers of Colonel Hacker's regiment, some of the very men probably who five years before had stood round the scaffold at Whitehall, interposing between the executioner of Charles I. and the crowd of London citizens who thronged the street, murmuring at the bloody deed.[2] The troopers stopped the meeting, and were about to arrest all the attenders, but George Fox undertook to be answerable for the others, and while arresting him they took his word for the appearance of his friends. With one companion, Alexander Parker of Bolton, Fox was taken into the presence of Colonel Hacker, who sat surrounded by his major and captains. The time was an unusually critical one—it was apparently the summer of 1654. Oliver Cromwell had been for about half-a-year Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, and Gerard and Vowel's plot, the first of many for his assassination, had either just been discovered, or was known to be in agitation.[3] Colonel Hacker and his troopers had got it into their heads that this conference of Friends at Whetstone, apparently so harmless and peaceable, covered a design either to assassinate Cromwell, or to bring in Charles II.[4] The conversation which the Colonel held with the accused failed alto-

[1] "For there were several Friends come from various parts" (I. 207).

[2] The death-warrant of Charles I. proves that Colonel Hacker and one of his associates in this work were only delegated to the office of superintending the execution after at least two other officers had refused it. (Gardiner, iv. 309.)

[3] "At this time there was a rumour of a plot against Oliver Cromwell" (I. 207).

[4] "I told them I had been formerly sent up a prisoner by Colonel Hacker from Leicester to London, under pretence that I held meetings to plot to bring in King Charles" (I. 534).

gether to remove this impression. "Much reasoning," says Fox, "I had with them about the light of Christ which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Colonel Hacker asked whether it was not this light of Christ that made Judas betray his Master, and afterwards led him to hang himself. I told him, 'No; that was the spirit of darkness, which hated Christ and His Light.' Then Colonel Hacker said I might go home and keep there, and not go abroad to meetings. I told him, 'I was an innocent man free from plots, and denied [disapproved of] all such work.' His son Needham said, 'Father, this man hath reigned too long; it is time to have him cut off.' I asked him, 'For what? What had I done? or whom had I wronged from a child? for I was bred and born in that country, and who could accuse me of any evil from a child?'" However, on his persistent refusal to promise not to attend any more meetings, it was decided that Fox should be sent up to London to the Lord Protector, under the care of Captain Drury, one of his life-guards.

In the early morning before he departed, Fox sought an interview with Colonel Hacker, and was accordingly admitted into his bedroom. The Colonel again tried to persuade him to promise to hold no more meetings, but he might as well have asked him to promise not to eat or to breathe. "Then," said Hacker, "you must go before the Protector." With that Fox kneeled down by his bedside, and besought the Lord to forgive him, for he was as Pilate, though he should wash his hands; and when the day of his misery and trial should come upon him, he was then to remember what Fox had now communicated to him. There came a day six years

after, when Hacker bitterly remembered these words of his prisoner.

Often as Fox was asked on the journey, if he would not go quietly home and hold no more meetings, he always returned the same sturdy negative. At length he and his escort reached London, and he was lodged in the "Mermaid Inn"[1] "over against the Mews at Charing Cross." Captain Drury then went to the Protector to report the arrival of his prisoner, and returned with the demand which has been already described, that Fox should give a written promise not to take up the sword against the then existing Government.

The Protector, when he received the paper containing Fox's declaration against all war, desired to see the writer, of whom doubtless he had often heard by the reports of his major-generals. After some time Captain Drury brought Fox to the palace at Whitehall. He found the Protector in his bedroom, half-dressed, being waited upon by a valet named Harvey, who had himself for a short time joined the new Society of Friends. On entering, Fox uttered in his deep and thrilling voice his usual salutation, "Peace be to this house," and then he proceeded to exhort the great Protector to keep in the fear of God, that he might be directed by the Divine wisdom, and order all things under his hand to God's glory. Much conversation on religious subjects followed, and in it Oliver evidently showed a capacity for understanding the spiritual side

[1] Not of course the Mermaid which was made famous by the colloquies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. That was in Bread Street, Cheapside. It might be worth inquiry why the Mermaid at this time was so popular as an inn sign.

of Christianity which surprised his visitor.[1] "Only," said he, "you are too fond quarrelling with the ministers." This charge, of course, Fox repelled, declaring in his usual manner that he only followed the example of prophets and apostles in denouncing "the false prophets who preached for filthy lucre, and divined for money, and who were covetous and greedy, and could never have enough." While Fox spoke, Cromwell said several times, "It is very good: it is the truth." The conversation then turned on the Scriptures, which Fox was accused of esteeming too lightly. His answer was, "All Christendom (so called) possesses the Scriptures, but lacks the power and spirit of the men who gave forth the Scriptures; and this is the reason why Christians are not in fellowship with the Son, nor with the Father, nor with the Scriptures, nor with one another."

Much more passed between these two men, each in his different way such a notable product of seventeenth-century England. Then the crowd of courtiers began to flock into the great man's *levée*, and Fox turned to go. As he turned, Cromwell caught him by the hand, and with tears in his eyes said, "Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour a day together, we should be nearer one to the other. I wish no more ill to thee than to my own soul." Said Fox, "If thou didst, thou wouldest wrong thy own soul. Only hearken to God's voice, stand in His counsel and obey it; and that will keep thy heart from the hardness which will otherwise overtake it." Cromwell answered, "It is true." Fox left the presence-chamber,

[1] "Much discourse I had with him about religion, wherein he carried himself very moderately."

followed by Drury, who told him it was the Lord Protector's decision that he should be set at liberty, and might go whither he would. Then he was brought into a great hall (was it the Banqueting Chamber of Inigo Jones?), where the gentlemen of the new court were to dine together; but as soon as Fox learned that he was brought there that he might join them in the repast, he stiffly refused, sending a message to the Protector that he would not eat of his bread nor drink of his drink. "Now," said Cromwell, on receiving this message, "I see there is a people risen up that I cannot win with gifts, honours, offices or places; but all other sects and people I can." "It is not likely," said Fox in reply, "that we who have forsaken all that we had, should look for such favours from him."

This was not Fox's last visit to Whitehall, though it was for the time his last interview with the Protector. He returned to the "Mermaid Inn," now a free man, and went thence into the city, where he had many "great and powerful meetings," attended by such dense throngs of people that he found it difficult to make his way into and out of the place of assembly. It is probably to this date that we must refer the practical foundation of the Quaker church in the capital city.

But after a time he went to Whitehall again, and was "moved to declare the day of the Lord among them, and that the Lord was come to teach His people Himself." The officers of the New Model army and the gentlemen of the Protector's household seem to have heard him for a time with patience, and some of them with more than patience, for "there was a great convincement in the Protector's house and family"; but no further opportunity of access to the Protector was

afforded him, owing, as he says, to the rudeness of the officers. Probably the real reason was the press of State business, which would not admit of Cromwell's listening to the lengthy discourses of his visitor, however in his heart he might be convinced of his earnestness and spiritual insight.

During these visits to Whitehall, George Fox had a curious encounter with one of Cromwell's chaplains, or, to use his own description, "one of several priests whom Oliver had about him. This was his newsmonger, an envious priest, and a light, scornful, chaffy man." Would that Fox had given us some clearer indication which of the well-known chaplains of the Protector was labelled by him in this contemptuous fashion. When Fox met this man, something in his conversation seems to have aroused his suspicions, and he bade him repent, an exhortation which so moved the chaplain's wrath that he inserted in his newspaper next week the following item of news—"George Fox the Quaker has been to Whitehall, and bid a godly minister there to repent." Certainly the minister, whether godly or not, seems to have been a purveyor of extremely trivial gossip, and one marvels that Fox should have thought it worth while to bandy words with him. The chaplain stated in his newspaper that Fox wore silver buttons, "which was false, for they were but alchemy." He also said that Fox "hung ribands on people's arms, which made them follow him," —the suggestion probably being that there was some kind of enchantment in these ribands. There was a great deal of discussion backwards and forwards as to the originator of this idle tale; and the chaplain promised to insert George Fox's contradiction in his

newspaper, but failed to keep his promise. From the following sentence it appears that now, in the day of Cromwell's uncontrolled power, it was the Independents, rather than the Friends' old adversaries, the Presbyterians, who were taking the lead in the repression of Quakerism. "These priests, the newsmongers, were of the Independent sect, like those of Leicester; but the Lord's power came over all their lies, and swept them away; and many came to see the naughtiness of these priests."

It was probably on account of the attitude thus assumed by the Independent clergy that Cromwell, though himself earnest for toleration, permitted the persecution of Quakers to be carried on so fiercely, that about three thousand of their number were imprisoned on one pretence or other between 1648 and 1660, and that thirty-two actually died in prison, "in the time of the Commonwealth, and of Oliver and Richard the Protectors."

CHAPTER IX

LAUNCESTON GAOL

After the account of Fox's visit to the Protector at Whitehall, he inserts in his *Journal* copies of several "papers" which he felt himself called upon to write to various "sorts and conditions of men"; "to all professors of Christianity"; "to such as follow the world's fashions"; "to the Pope and all kings and rulers in Europe"; "to the Triers" (a body of men appointed by Cromwell to examine the holders of benefices); "to those that made a scorn of trembling and quaking"; "to churches gathered into outward forms upon the earth"; to the Protector, as to the trouble brought upon Friends by the new oath of abjuration, and to Friends themselves, exhorting them to be patient under the new persecution that was coming upon them. This last letter begins with the question, "Who is moved by the power of the Lord to offer himself to justice for his brother or sister that lies in prison, and to go lie there in their stead, that his brother or sister may come out of prison, and so offer his life for his brother or sister?"——"As Christ hath laid down His life for you, so lay down your lives for one another. Here you may go over the heads of the persecutors and reach the witness of God in all."

The time was at hand when Fox himself was again to endure imprisonment, one of the longest and most terrible of all that he had to undergo.

I pass rapidly over his journeyings in the eastern and midland counties in the year 1655; his discussion at Reading with the Ranters, "who pleaded that God made the Devil"; his sufferings from "the scholars at Cambridge," who pulled his companion off his horse, and "were so rude in the courts and in the streets, that miners, colliers, and carters could never be ruder, raging as much against the man who denounced the trade of preaching, which they were there as apprentices to learn, as ever Diana's craftsmen did against Paul." Then came one more visit to his native place, Fenny Drayton, where not a priest or "professor" appeared of all the great company that had been gathered together against him. He asked the reason, and was told that the priest of the neighbouring Nuneaton was dead, and that eight or nine of them were seeking to get his benefice, flocking to the spoil as carrion crows to a sheep's carcase. At Evesham a pair of high stocks[1] had been prepared expressly for him, but he would not turn aside from his course, and seems to have passed through the town without being confined in them. At Tewkesbury, the "priest" came with a great rabble of rude people to disturb his meeting, and when Fox "turned the people to the Divine Light which Christ, the heavenly and spiritual Man, enlightened them withal, the priest began to rage against the Light and denied it, for neither priest nor professor could endure to hear the Light spoken of." At Warwick, he appealed

[1] In the MS. Journal they are thus described, "a pair of stocks, a yard and a half high, with a trap-door to come to it."

in vain to the Protector's "Instrument of Government, in which liberty of conscience was granted." Notwithstanding this, the rude multitude, encouraged, or at least not hindered by "the bailiff of the town," stoned him, and tried to unhorse him. He and his companions had got clear of the town, when he told his friends that "it was upon him from the Lord to go back into it again; if any of them felt anything upon him from the Lord, he might follow him, and the rest that did not might go on to" the next halting-place. One man, John Crook, turned and followed the dauntless preacher, who "passed up through the market in the dreadful power of God, declaring the word of life unto the people, and showing them their unworthiness of the name of Christians." "Some struck at me," he says, "but the Lord's power was over them, and gave me dominion over all."

These journeys in the Midlands having been ended, and London again visited, Fox prepared to break entirely new ground by a visit to the western counties of England, in which apparently there had hitherto been no Quaker-preaching of any importance.

Through Sussex and Hampshire he journeyed into Dorsetshire, having for his companion Edward Pyot of Bristol, and at Dorchester he went to an inn which happened to be kept by a Baptist. He sent to ask the Baptists of the town for leave to invite "the sober people" to a meeting in their chapel, but they refused, and accordingly an invitation was sent to them and all who feared God to visit the Quaker missionaries at the inn. "They were in a great rage, and their teacher and many of them came up and slapped their Bibles on the table. I asked them why they were so angry;

were they angry with the Bible? But they fell into a discourse about their water-baptism." Fox asked them if they could claim the same power which the apostles had to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit by the administration of baptism, and on their modestly disclaiming this power, proceeded by a series of Socratic questions to draw the conclusion, that as they had not the Divine power which was bestowed on the apostles, they were baptizing in the power of the Evil One. Naturally the Baptists were much exasperated, and shook off the dust of their feet against the two Quakers, but many of the substantial citizens seem to have joined them. At Weymouth, the result of a large assembly which lasted for several hours was the establishment of a regular meeting of Quakers in that town, partly formed out of converted Ranters, "who came to own the truth and to live very soberly." At the same place Fox made another convert, whose name is not disclosed, but whose disposition is amusingly portrayed in the following paragraph:—

"There was a captain of horse in the town, who sent to me, and would fain have had me to stay longer; but I was not to stay. He and his man rode out of town with me about seven miles, Edward Pyot also being with me. This captain was the fattest, merriest man, the most cheerful and the most given to laughter that ever I met with; insomuch that I was several times moved to speak in the dreadful power of the Lord to him; and yet it was become so customary to him that he would presently laugh at anything he saw. But I still admonished him to come to sobriety, sincerity, and the fear of the Lord. We staid at an inn that night, and in the morning I was moved to

speak to him again when he parted from us. Next time I saw him he told me, that when I spoke to him at parting, the power of the Lord so struck him, that before he got home he was serious enough, and had discontinued his laughing. He afterwards was convinced, and became a serious and good man, and died in the truth."

At Kingsbridge, as there were many people drinking in the inn where the travellers lodged, Fox went in amongst them and preached them a sermon on the inward Light. Some probably were impressed and some amused by the unexpected utterance; but one effect it had upon all—it stopped the consumption of liquor. "The innkeeper stood uneasy, seeing it hindered his guests from drinking; and as soon as the last words were out of my mouth, he snatched up the candle and said, 'Come, here is a light for you to go into your chamber.' Next morning, when he was cool, I represented to him what an uncivil thing it was for him to do so: then warning him of the day of the Lord, we got ready and passed away."

At Plymouth they held a meeting in the house of one of the numerous Carys of Devonshire. A certain Elizabeth Trelawney, daughter of the Trelawney baronet of the day, was there, and, being somewhat deaf, sat near to George Fox. The sermon thus intently listened to produced its usual effect. She was "convinced," and when some "jangling Baptists" came into the room after the meeting was over, she bore witness to her new conviction of the Truth. At Plymouth, as at many of the other places which have been named, the meetings of the Friends, which were established at the time of Fox's visit, still exist after the lapse of 240 years.

Fox now crossed over into Cornwall, but his visit to that county, though it resulted in one of the longest and most severe of his imprisonments, did not produce anything like so large a crop of conversions to Quakerism as rewarded his visits to Lancashire and Cumberland. He himself accounts for this in some measure by saying that he "could not obtain knowledge of any sober people, through the badness of the innkeepers." This remark helps us to understand his usual mode of procedure on arriving at a strange place, which was apparently to go to an inn kept by a Puritan landlord, and use his host's local knowledge in order to gather together an audience of "sober," that is spiritually-minded people. Why this mode of procedure failed him in Cornwall can be readily understood from the history of the Civil War. The westernmost county of England, in which there is now, under the influence of John Wesley and his successors, so strong a Nonconformist element, was in the seventeenth century enthusiastic for Church and King. Pendennis Castle was one of the last strongholds on which the royal banner was kept flying. Cornishmen, with their brother Britons the Welshmen, still stood by Charles Stuart when all Saxon England disowned him, and popular legends still tell of a certain battle or skirmish which was fought near Falmouth after the Civil War over all the rest of England was ended, and before the news of the pacification had reached that remote district.[1] In such an episcopally-minded and Royalist county the

[1] This skirmish took place on a little grassy plain which yet bears the name of "Fine and Brave," and according to local tradition headless Cavaliers and Roundheads are believed still to be seen galloping over it in the moonlight.

new teaching, which required a Puritan *nidus* to work in, even while opposing Puritan dogmas, had little chance of success, and though a few meetings were established, there was no general ingathering to Quakerism.

There was, however, a determination on the part of the authorities of the county to keep it clear of the new sect, and when Fox reached Marazion (which seems at that time to have had a corporation of its own), the Mayor and Aldermen of the little town, acting in conjunction with the Sheriff of the county, sent the constables to summon Fox and Pyot before them. No warrant for their apprehension had been issued, and when Fox asked the constables to produce their warrant, one of them pulled out his mace from under his cloak, and said that was his warrant. However, no arrest was made. Pyot went unconstrained to the Mayor and Aldermen of Marazion, and preached them a sermon, to which they seem to have listened with attention.

Possibly the three Friends (one W. Salt of London now accompanied Fox and Pyot) might have ridden back again through the county without molestation, but for the zeal of a county magistrate and major in the army, named Peter Ceely of St. Ives. According to a frequent practice of his, Fox had written a short address, to be sent to the seven parishes at the Land's End. There was nothing in this address which any Christian man could possibly object to. It merely set forth in language unusually simple and clear Fox's great proposition, "Every one of you hath a light from Christ, which lets you see you should not lie, nor do wrong to any, nor swear, nor curse, nor take God's name in vain, nor steal." But a copy of the paper was handed to a

mounted traveller whom the party met about three miles from Marazion, who proved to be a servant of this Major Ceely's. Riding forward, he delivered it to his master at St. Ives, where the Friends were delayed for a time, Pyot's horse having cast a shoe. While the horse was being shod, Fox walked down to the shore, and looked forth upon the Bristol Channel. When he returned to his friends, he found all the little town in an uproar, and a rude mob dragging off Pyot and Salt before Major Ceely. "I followed them," says Fox, "into the justice's house, though they did not lay hands upon me. When we came in, the house was full of rude people; whereupon I asked whether there were not an officer among them to keep the people civil. Major Ceely said he was a magistrate. I told him 'he should show forth gravity and sobriety then, and use his authority to keep people civil: for I never saw any people ruder: the Indians were more like Christians than they.' After a while, they brought forth the paper aforesaid, and asked whether I would own it. I said 'Yes.' Then he tendered the oath of abjuration to us, whereupon I put my hand in my pocket and drew forth the answer to it, which had been given to the Protector. After I had given him that, he examined us severally, one by one. He had with him a silly young priest, who asked us many frivolous questions, and amongst the rest he desired to cut my hair, which then was pretty long: but I was not[1] to cut it, though many times many were offended at it. I told them, 'I had no pride in it, and it was not of my own putting on.'[2] At length the justice put us

[1] *i. e.* "I did not think it my duty to cut it."

[2] Sewel, the historian of Quakerism, remarks on this—"It

under a guard of soldiers, who were hard and wild, like the justice himself; nevertheless we warned the people of the day of the Lord, and declared the truth to them. The next day he sent us, guarded by a party of horse, with swords and pistols, to Redruth."

From Redruth next day, notwithstanding the fact that it was Sunday, the soldiers insisted on their travelling forward a stage. They had preached to the people in the morning amidst howls of rage; it was already afternoon of the short January day, and the party had ten miles to ride. But Fox had, as he believed, a message from the Lord, and insisted on delivering it. "When we were got to the town's end I was moved of the Lord to go back again to speak to the old man of the house; the soldiers drew out their pistols and swore I should not go back. I heeded them not, but rode back, and they rode after me. I cleared myself [delivered my message] to the old man and the people, and then returned with them and reproved them for being so rude and violent.

"At night we were brought to a town called Smethick then, but since Falmouth. It being the evening of the First-day [Sunday], there came to our inn the chief constable of the place and many sober people, some of whom began to inquire concerning us. We told them we were prisoners for truth's sake, and much

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happened also at other times that because of his long hair he was spoken to, as I have seen myself; but of this I am fully persuaded, that he had not the least pride in it; but it seems to me not improbable that he, seeing some would make it a kind of holiness to wear short hair, did the contrary to show that in some things there was a Christian liberty, for which we ought not to judge one another." An interesting comment on the name "Roundheads."

discourse we had with them concerning the things of God. They were very sober and loving to us. Some were convinced and stood faithful ever after."

The captain of the little party of soldiers who were escorting the Friends was apparently a rough and lawless man named Keat. They believed that it was only the bolting of their door which prevented him from making some attack upon them during the night. In this they may have been mistaken, but it was certain that next day a kinsman of Keat's, "a rude, wicked man," was brought by him into their room, while he himself stood outside. "This evil-minded man walking huffing up and down the room, I bade him fear the Lord; whereupon he ran upon me, struck me with both his hands, and placing his leg behind me, would fain have thrown me down, but he could not, for I stood stiff and still and let him strike. As I looked towards the door, I saw Captain Keat look on and see his kinsman thus beat and abuse me. Whereupon I said, 'Keat, dost thou allow this?' and he said he did. 'Is this manly or civil,' said I, 'to have us under a guard and put a man to abuse and beat us? Is this manly or civil or Christian?'"

The constables were sent for, the magistrate's warrant was examined and proved to be an order to conduct the prisoners safely to Captain Fox, governor of Pendennis Castle, or, if he should not be at home, to convey them to Launceston Gaol. The chief constable strongly remonstrated against the rude and violent conduct of the soldiers, and his remonstrances were backed by the officers of the garrison of Pendennis. As the governor was gone to Bodmin to meet Major Desborough, it was decided that the Friends must be sent to Launceston,

but the chief constable at first positively refused to give them in charge to their rough bullying escort. "If it cost twenty shillings in charges to carry us up, they should not have the warrant again. I showed the soldiers the baseness of their carriage towards us; and they walked up and down the house, being pitifully blank and down." Eventually, on the soldiers' entreaty and promise to be more civil to their prisoners, the warrant was given back to them, and the party started for Launceston. On the road they met General Desborough, Cromwell's brother-in-law, and one of the major-generals, the satraps through whom, for a year and a half,[1] the Protector administered the government of England. Desborough's satrapy included the six western counties from Gloucestershire to Land's End, and the comprehensive powers of himself and his fellows gave them jurisdiction over religion and morals, as well as over more purely political questions.[2] The great man was apparently journeying westward, when the little troop of Fox's escort met him. The captain of the troop that rode before him recognized Fox—he had perhaps made his acquaintance during the preacher's visit to Whitehall—and said, "Oh, Mr. Fox, what do you here?" Fox replied, "I am a prisoner." "Alack," said the captain, "for what?" Fox told him he had been arrested while he was travelling on his religious errand. "Then," said he, "I will speak to my lord, and he will

[1] From June 1655 to February 1657. The proceedings which we are now considering took place in January 1656.

[2] In the interesting article on "Cromwell's Major-Generals" in the *English Historical Review* (x. 492), it is stated that Major-General Butler fined a certain Mr. Barton £6 for saying "God damn me," and protested that it should have been £10, if the culprit's horse would have fetched as much.

set you at liberty." He rode up to "my lord's" coach and explained the case to Desborough. Possibly if Fox could have left the matter in the captain's hands he might have had his liberty, but when he himself began to tell the story of his wrongs, and touched upon his doctrine, Desborough "began to speak against the Light of Christ, for which," says Fox, "I reproved him. Then he told the soldiers they might carry us to Launceston; for he could not stay to talk with us, lest his horses should take cold."

At Bodmin, Captain Keat put Fox into a room where stood a man with a naked rapier in his hand, and when the captive remonstrated, answered, "O pray hold your tongue, for if you speak to this man we cannot all rule him, he is so devilish;" in other words, the man with the rapier was a dangerous lunatic. Naturally Fox complained that such an apology did not mend matters, and he at length succeeded in getting another room. "In the evening we declared the truth to the people, but they were hardened and dark people. The soldiers also, notwithstanding their fair promises, were very rude and wicked to us again, and sat up drinking and roaring all night." It occurs to one that these roysterers can hardly have been the precise, sanctimonious soldiers of Cromwell's New Model army; possibly both they and their captain may have been some of the disbanded Cavalier troops taken into the service of the Commonwealth.

Next day the prisoners were brought to Launceston and handed over to the care of the gaoler. Thus began one of the longest and most terrible of Fox's many imprisonments, which lasted nearly eight months, from the 22nd of January to the 13th of September 1656.

For nine weeks which intervened between the commitment of the Friends to prison and their trial at the Assizes they appear to have been fairly treated, matters being smoothed by their each paying the gaoler seven shillings a week for their board, and seven shillings for the keep of their horses. Their peculiar usage of addressing all persons with "Thou" and "Thee," and their scruple about the removal of the hat were, however, the subject of general remark, and there were many speculations how this behaviour would be tolerated by the great judge who would come down from London to try them at the Assizes. The general expectation seems to have been that he would at once order them to be hung.

At length, somewhere about the 22nd of March, the Assizes were held, and the long-expected judge took his seat on the bench. He proved to be Chief Justice Glyn, a man who, though not a Jefferies or a Scroggs, has earned for himself a somewhat unfavourable reputation as a time-server, and a politician too keenly intent on selfish ends; a patriot in 1640, a noisy Presbyterian in 1646, a Cromwellian under the Protectorate, and a Royalist as soon as General Monk began to move for the Restoration of the Stuart dynasty. In this trial, however, he does not appear to have done anything unfitting to his high position.

The little town of Launceston was crowded with the country folks, who had come from far and near to gaze upon these strange beings who were going to defy the great Chief Justice; and the soldiers and javelin-men who guarded them had some difficulty in making a way for them through the crowd. At length, however, they pushed their way in, and the judge, lifting

up his eyes, saw a group of austere, plainly clad men standing in the dock, with their broad hats overshadowing their faces, pale with nine weeks of prison air. But the scene must be described in Fox's own words.

"When we were brought into the court, we stood some time with our hats on, and all was quiet, and I was moved to say, 'Peace be amongst you!' Judge Glyn, a Welshman, then Chief Justice of England, said to the gaoler, 'What be these you have brought here into the court?' 'Prisoners, my Lord!' said he. 'Why do you not put off your hats?' said the judge to us. We said nothing. 'Put off your hats,' said the judge again. Still we said nothing. Then said the judge, 'The court commands you to put off your hats.' Then I spoke and said, 'When did ever any magistrate, king, or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats when they came before them in their courts, either amongst the Jews, the people of God, or amongst the heathen?[1] and if the law of England doth command any such thing, show me that law, either written or printed.' Then the judge grew very angry and said, 'I do not carry my law books on my back.' 'But,' said I, 'tell me where it is printed in any statute book, that I may read it.' Then said the judge, 'Take him away, prevaricator! I'll *ferk* him.' So they took us away and put us among the thieves. Presently after he calls to the gaoler, 'Bring them up again.' 'Come,' said he, 'when had they hats from

[1] A quaint little illustration of the way in which Fox, who was accused of undervaluing the Scripture, had absorbed it into the very tissue of his mind; so that for him the proceedings of an English Court of Justice in the seventeenth century were to be modelled on the customs of an Oriental people two thousand years before that date.

Moses to Daniel? Come, answer me. I have you fast now,' said he. I replied, 'Thou mayest read in the third of Daniel that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hose, and their hats on.'[1] This plain instance stopped him, so that, not having anything else to say to the point, he cried again, 'Take them away, gaoler.'"

In the afternoon the prisoners were again brought up, and after there had been some discussion about a "paper against swearing," which Fox, shocked at the proceedings of the court, had handed to the grand and petty juries, and which the judge pronounced to be of a seditious character, the old question of the hats came up again. "Then they let fall that subject; and the judge fell upon us about our hats again, bidding the gaoler take them off, which he did, *and gave them to us; and we put them on again.* Then we asked the judge and the justices what we had lain in prison for these nine weeks, seeing they now objected nothing to us but about our hats; and as for putting off our hats, I told them that was the honour which God would lay in the dust, though they made so much to do about it: the honour which is of men, and which men seek one of another, and is the mark of unbelievers. . . Then the judge began to make a great speech, how he represented the Lord

[1] Curiously enough, the word here translated "hats" (Carbalathon) is now believed to be more properly translated "mantles." It is strange that Fox, with his intimate acquaintance with the Bible, should not have perceived the real point at issue between oriental and occidental customs, that among the Jews, as with so many other Eastern nations, it was not by uncovering the head, but by "loosing the shoes from off the feet," that reverence was shown to a superior power.

Protector's person, who had made him Lord Chief Justice of England, and sent him to come that circuit," and so forth.

Some *modus vivendi* as to the hat question must have been obtained between the court and the prisoners, for we next find Fox pointing out the errors in his indictment, and insisting on the production of the *mittimus* under which he had been committed to prison. This had been given forth by Major Ceely of St. Ives, the fussy magistrate to whose servant Fox's letter to the seven Land's End parishes had been handed. This Major Ceely must, one would think, have been either insane, or an outrageous liar; for he now, sitting beside the Chief Justice, said to him—"May it please you, my lord, this man [pointing to Fox] went aside with me, and told me how serviceable I might be for his design; that he could raise 40,000 men at an hour's warning, and involve the nation in blood, and so bring in King Charles." It was not difficult to prove the falsity of such a preposterous accusation as this, and, as Fox says, "the judge saw clearly that instead of ensnaring me, he had ensnared himself." Not satisfied, however, with this rebuff, Major Ceely rose again and said—"If it please you, my lord, to hear me: this man struck me, and gave me such a blow as I never had in my life." Challenged by Fox to say where and when, he answered that it was in the Castle green, and that Captain Bradden was standing by and saw the blow. Bradden, however, seems to have shown by a shrug of his shoulders his opinion of the absurdity of the charge, and the judge, who evidently saw that Ceely was a witness on whose evidence no reliance could be placed, went no further into the matter. According to Fox,

"the judge, finding those snares would not hold, cried, 'Take him away, gaoler,' and then when we were taken away, he fined us twenty marks apiece for not putting off our hats, and to be kept in prison till we paid it; so he sent us back to the gaol."

In other words, the charge on which the Friends had been originally arrested fell to the ground, but for "contempt of court" they were each fined £13 6*s.* 8*d.*, with imprisonment till the fine was paid. A severe sentence certainly, but, considering the sensitiveness of an English court of law on the subject of disrespect to its presiding officer, and considering also the novelty of the objection to remove the hat, and the small experience which judges had yet had of the adamantine nature of a Quaker scruple, not a sentence which reflects any serious discredit on the character of the Chief Justice.

The wildly absurd charge which Ceely had in the second instance brought against Fox was explained by Captain Bradden, who with seven or eight magistrates called that evening at the prison, and told the Friends that neither the judge, nor any one in court, believed Major Ceely's accusation about a conspiracy, though Bradden believed that if he could have found another witness, Ceely would have pressed for a capital conviction. Then Fox asked him why he had remained silent when the Major vouched him as a witness for the striking of a blow. "Why," said he, "when Major Ceely and I came by you, as you were walking on the Castle green [the courtyard of the prison], he put off his hat to you, and said, 'How do you do, Mr. Fox—your servant, sir!' Then you said to him, 'Major Ceely, take heed of hypocrisy, and of a rotten heart; for

when came I to be thy master, and thou my servant? Do servants use to cast their masters into prison?' This was the great blow he meant you gave him."

The sentence passed on Fox and his friends, it will be remembered, was not primarily one of imprisonment, but fine, and imprisonment till the fine should be paid. There is no reason to suppose that they could not have paid £13 apiece; in fact, the price of their horses alone would probably have been nearly sufficient for the purpose. But there was now to be a demonstration of the fact, often proved in after years, that the Quaker would rather undergo any amount of imprisonment than satisfy what he conceived to be an unjust demand. It was in many cases a living death that he thus confronted, for the prisons of England in that century were horrible beyond description; still, when the Quaker had made up his mind that a certain claim was unrighteous, he would rather suffer anything than pay it; and this invincible resolution of his had no small share in bringing about the victorious issue of the battle which was to be waged for liberty of thought during the following half-century.

Now that the Assizes were over, and the Friends were evidently in for a long term of imprisonment, they decided to send their horses away, and no longer to pay the gaoler his fourteen shillings apiece for the horses' bait and the riders' board. This exasperated the gaoler, who as well as the under-gaoler, and the wives of both men, were all notorious bad characters, bearing the mark of the branding-iron for theft and other crimes. The gaol itself and the lands round it belonged to a Baptist preaching Colonel named Bennet, and the appointment to the office of gaoler was in his

gift. The gaoler, in his rage at being baulked of his gains, thrust Fox and his friends into a horrible dungeon called Doomsdale, the especial receptacle of condemned murderers and witches, and said to be haunted by their unquiet spirits. Of the spirits Fox had no fear. "I told them," he says, "that if all the spirits and devils in hell were there I was over them in the power of God, and feared no such thing; for Christ, our priest, would sanctify the walls and house to us; He who bruised the head of the devil." But the material discomforts, or I should rather say, the horrors of Doomsdale could not be so lightly passed over, and the description which Fox gives of them in his *Journal*,[1] a description which would sicken my readers if I dared to quote it, shows us that at that time, after England had been for a thousand years a Christian country, her unhappy prisoners were treated with a barbarity which could hardly be surpassed at this day even in the awful pest-houses of Morocco.[2] In reading this and similar narratives one feels a thrill of indignation at the divines and statesmen of all sects and schools, who were wrangling over Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Independency, the eastward position of the altar, and the *jus divinum* of synods and presbyteries, while the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth were so dismally neglected. The members of the Society founded by Fox may reflect with some

[1] I. 282.

[2] Fox's Journals supply many vivid illustrations of Macaulay's words, "the prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime and every disease. At the assizes the lean and yellow culprits brought with them from their cells to the dock an atmosphere of stench and pestilence, which sometimes avenged them signally on bench, bar, and jury" [the well-known "gaol-fever"]. (*History of England*, Cap. III. ad finem.)

satisfaction, that it was a saintly woman, the daughter of a Quaker family, who first carried the torch of Christian civilization into the hellish darkness of Newgate.[1]

At the present day the grim fortress of Launceston Castle has none but pleasant associations for the inhabitants of the little Cornish town. Leased from the Crown by a public-spirited nobleman who has generously handed it over to the public, its round shell-keep rises over a terraced garden planted with noble evergreens, and below this garden is a fine level playground for the school children, which was formerly the courtyard of the Castle. At the north-eastern end of this is a ruined gateway containing a little roofless chamber about twelve feet square, which rightly or wrongly is identified by local tradition with the horrible Doomsdale of Fox's *Journal*.

In this place, foul with indescribable nastiness, the prisoners, whom the gaoler called "hatchet-faced dogs," were kept for many days before he would allow them to clean it, and fed like dogs through a grating. Once a girl brought them a little meat, but he arrested her for house-breaking, sued her in the town court, and put her to so much trouble that none of the other inhabitants, though kindly disposed, durst bring them water or victuals. However, before long the quarter sessions at Bodmin were held, and a statement of the hardships inflicted on the prisoners, drawn up and presented to the magistrates, brought down an order "that Doomsdale door should be opened, and that the prisoners should be allowed to cleanse it and to buy

[1] John Howard's work, noble as it was, seems to have been more efficacious on the Continent than in England itself.

their meat in the town." A petition was also sent to the Protector, setting forth the whole history of their arrest and imprisonment, and this was replied to by an order to Captain Fox, governor of Pendennis Castle, to inquire into the grievances complained of. Captain Fox, whom his namesake speaks of rather slightingly as "a light, chaffy man," seems in this case to have done his duty faithfully. The abusive soldiers, who had formed the escort party, their commander Captain Keat, and his evil-minded kinsman who had struck Fox in the inn, and tried to throw him, were all severely reprimanded. There were many of the county magnates staying at that time at Pendennis, and they told the bullying kinsman that if the Quaker chose to change his principle, and take the extremity of the law against him, he would probably recover sound damages for the assault.

It would seem that after these petitions, and the replies to them, the treatment of the prisoners was somewhat improved, and they were taken out of Doomsdale. All sorts of people came to visit them—Friends, officers in the army, private soldiers, "professors," and other prisoners—and the encounters between Fox and his visitors were sometimes amusing, sometimes alarming. One Colonel Rouse, a justice of the peace, came one day to see the Friends, bringing a great company with him. "He was as full of words and talk," says Fox, "as ever I heard any man in my life, so that there was no speaking to him." At length, tired of the vain attempt to get in a word edgeways, Fox asked him whether he had ever been at school, and knew what belonged to questions and answers. "At school," said he; "yes." "At school," said the soldiers who were

among his followers; "doth he say so to our colonel that is a scholar?" Then said Fox, "If he be so [a scholar] let him be still, and receive answers to what he hath said." "Then I was moved to speak the word of life to him in God's dreadful power, which came so over him that he could not open his mouth; his face swelled and was red like a turkey; his lips moved, and he mumbled something, but the people thought he would have fallen down. I stepped to him, and he said he was never so in his life before; for the Lord's power stopped the evil power in him: so that he was almost choked. This man was ever after very loving to Friends, and not so full of airy words to us, though he was full of pride, but the Lord's power came over him and the rest that were with him."

A half-drunken soldier came in to see the prisoners, and when one of the Friends was "exhorting him to sobriety," he began to draw his sword. Quite undaunted, Fox stepped up to him, and told him what a cowardly thing it was to draw a sword on an unarmed man, and a prisoner, that he was not fit to be trusted with such a weapon, and that some men in their place would have taken his sword from him and broken it to pieces. The tipsy fellow had sense enough left to be ashamed, and reeled out of the room.

Drunkenness seems to have been the order of the day in Launceston Castle. One night, at eleven o'clock, the gaoler came half drunk to Fox, and told him he had now got a man to dispute with him. Something about the gaoler's manner made Fox suspicious, and that night he spent not in his own chamber, but sleeping on the grass courtyard of the Castle. Still next day the gaoler maundered on about the dispute or debate

that was to be held, and the man who was to conduct it. At length it turned out that the debater was none other than a man who had been committed to prison as a rogue and a vagabond, for deceiving people by conjuring tricks, and that his method of argument was with a big clasp-knife. Being called out of his chamber Fox stepped to the top of the stairs, and saw the gaoler's wife standing on the stairs, and the conjurer at the bottom of them, holding his hand behind his back, and in a great rage. He asked him, "Man, what hast thou in thy hand behind thy back? Pluck thy hand before thee: let us see thy hand, and what thou hast in it." Out came the naked knife, but ere he could do any mischief with it, the gaoler's wife, to whom Fox complained of the meditated outrage, seems to have interfered and prevented further mischief.[1] Certainly the English prisons of the seventeenth century, with all their hideousness, must have been more amusing places to be imprisoned in than the monotonous penitentiaries of the nineteenth.

All this time the Friends were busily engaged in writing letters and pamphlets setting forth their views, and showing the injustice of their imprisonment. One such document, drawn up by Edward Pyot, who was probably the man of best education among them, was addressed to Chief Justice Glyn.[2] As it occupies thirteen closely printed octavo pages, it is safe to say that the busy judge never read it. More effectual was the action of a certain Friend named Humphrey Norton,[3] who went to the Protector and offered himself

[1] Fox's account of this adventure is rather obscure, and it is not easy to understand the gaoler's or the conjurer's motives.

[2] Dated fourteenth of fifth month [July] 1656.

[3] His name is given in the MS. Journal.

"body for body to lie in Doomsdale, if need were, in Fox's stead." Cromwell was struck by the loyal devotion which Fox had inspired, and turning to his Privy Council said, "Which of you would do so much for me if I were in the same condition?" It was of course decided that the law would not allow of such a substitution, but from this time Cromwell was evidently determined to put an end to Fox's imprisonment. Another impulse in the same direction was given by the words of Hugh Peters, fervidest of Puritans, staunchest and jolliest of army chaplains,[1] who shrewdly told his master Cromwell that they could do George Fox no greater service for the spreading of his principles in Cornwall than to keep him shut up in Launceston Castle.

The result of these varied agencies was that an order came down to Major-General Desborough for the liberation of the Quaker prisoners in Launceston Gaol. Desborough endeavoured to exact a promise that they would go home and preach no more, but this, though they told him that their mission in Cornwall was accomplished, they steadfastly refused to give. Waiving this point at last, he had then to meet the remonstrances of Colonel Bennet, the Puritan lessee of the gaol, the master of the drunken and felonious gaoler, who required payment of the gaoler's fees. There was a wrangle over this question between the Colonel and the prisoners, but they declared "they would give no fees, for they were innocent sufferers, and how could they expect fees from men who had suffered so long wrongfully?" In the end the Quaker obstinacy triumphed,

[1] See Gardiner, *History of the Civil War*, ii. 326, for a life-like portrait of Hugh Peters.

and Bennet (who had probably received a hint from the Major-General that he would not be supported in his claim) let the prisoners go on September 13, 1656.

To complete the story of Launceston Gaol it should be mentioned, that in the year after Fox's imprisonment the wicked gaoler lost his place, and was himself thrown into prison. While there he begged for alms from the Friends, who during Fox's imprisonment had been gathered into a congregation at Launceston, and eventually he was actually shut up himself in the horrible Doomsdale, chained, beaten, and told by his successor to "remember the good men whom he had wickedly without any cause cast into that nasty dungeon." He died in prison, and his wife and family came to want.

The fine castle-yard at Launceston, which is now, as has been said, a playground for the school-boys, was in Fox's time a bowling-green. Thither came the great Major-General Desborough to play the game which had been so dear to the imprisoned king, and thither came the magnates of the county and the citizens of Launceston to play likewise. We note with some regret that Fox thought himself called upon to protest against this innocent and healthful amusement. He put forth one of his favourite "papers," beginning, "The word of the Lord to all you vain and idle-minded people who are lovers of sports, pleasures, foolish exercises and recreations, as you call them. Consider your ways: what it is you are doing. Was this the end of your creation? Did God make all things for you, and you to serve your lusts and pleasures?" and so forth.

One cannot help feeling that here the Puritan atmosphere in which Fox had grown to manhood

clouded his spiritual perception. To have distinguished between recreations healthful and harmful had been well, but to condemn, as he virtually does in this paper, all recreation as contrary to the will of God, shows that he had need of further "openings" as to the place of wisely chosen recreation in the Divine economy.

CHAPTER X

IN WALES AND SCOTLAND

After Fox's liberation from Launceston Gaol, he journeyed in a leisurely manner through Cornwall and Devonshire to Bristol. At Exeter he went to see James Naylor, once his loved and trusted companion, now in prison on account of the extravagant proceedings of himself and some of his female followers in the west of England. Fox's own account of the interview is as follows :—

"From thence we came to Exeter, where many Friends were in prison, and amongst the rest James Naylor. For a little before we were set at liberty James had run out into imaginations, and a company with him, which raised up a great darkness in the nation. He came to Bristol, and made a disturbance there, and from thence he was coming to Launceston to see me, but was stopped by the way and imprisoned at Exeter. . . . The night we came to Exeter I spoke with James Naylor, for I saw he was out and wrong, and so was his company. Next day being First-day, we went to visit the prisoners, and had a meeting with them in the prison; but James Naylor and some of them could not stay the meeting. . . . The next day I spoke to James Naylor again, and he slighted what I

said, and was dark and much out; yet he would have come and kissed me. But I said, 'since he had turned against the power of God I could not receive his show of kindness.' The Lord moved me to slight him, and to set the power of God over him."

Shortly after this Naylor was liberated and went to Bristol, where the maddest scene in the whole tragedy was enacted—a male votary leading Naylor's horse bare-headed, while the females spread their handkerchiefs before him, and shouted "Hosannah!" a manifest and audacious parody of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Had such an event happened in our day, the chief actors would have been kindly taken care of in the nearest county asylum, and would probably in a few months have come out cured. Puritanism, itself so dour and dark, had no such compassion for the fevered brains of those whom it regarded as wilful blasphemers. Cromwell's second Parliament met on September 17, 1656, and one of its first employments was with the case of James Naylor, upon whom it passed that atrocious sentence, which in the eyes of posterity has caused the folly of the fanatic to be well-nigh forgotten in the thought of the bigot cruelty of his judges. To be pilloried for two hours, to be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange in the City, to be pilloried again two days after for two hours, to have his tongue bored through with a hot iron, and to be branded in the forehead with the letter B, to be again flogged through the streets of Bristol, and then to be committed to prison with solitary confinement and hard labour during the pleasure of Parliament—such was the sentence which these men imagined that they honoured Christ by

inflicting on His crazy imitator. We are rejoiced to find that the cruel severity of the sentence shocked many even of the Puritan party, and that Cromwell showed his utter disapproval of the action of Parliament, though he did not feel strong enough to come to an open rupture with that body.[1]

The one bright point in the whole dreary business is the fact that in the long hours of his solitary confinement, Naylor recovered spiritual sanity, and in deep contrition of soul retracted the claim to a kind of Messiahship which the extravagance of his followers had led him to set up.

It is the opinion of some of the most careful students of Quaker literature, that this business of Naylor's exercised a certain sobering influence on Fox himself. He perhaps saw that the doctrine of the Inward Light, which was the very life of life to his own soul, needed to be cautiously stated and kept always in its due relation to the life and words of the historic Christ, if it was not to work a kind of spiritual intoxication, such as it had produced in Naylor and the mad women who sang their hosannahs round him. It seems to me that in Fox's conflicts with the authorities after this time, we do not hear those charges of blasphemy advanced against him which were common in his earlier career. Probably too the very necessity of defending his doctrine against the disputants who attacked it had given a certain definiteness and coherence to those utterances, which were at first only a wild and mournful cry after the

[1] The dates are October 31, 1656, Committee of the House of Commons on Naylor's case; December 16, 1656, decision as to his punishment; December 18, 27, 1656, sentence executed in London; some time afterwards at Bristol; September 8, 1659, Naylor released from prison by order of the Rump Parliament.

living God. He himself tells us that one of his hearers, who had listened to him in his earlier days, remarked the change which had of late come over his ministry. Fox's comment is, "the change was in himself;" but it seems probable that there was also a real growth, an increased power and lucidity in the preacher.

The year 1656, which we have now reached, was a fruitful one for the new Society. Many thousands had now joined it, and there were seldom fewer than one thousand in prison at the same time, "some for non-payment of tithes, some for speaking in the churches, some for refusing to swear, and some for not putting off their hats." All this, it must be remembered, was under the Commonwealth, and under the rule of a man who undoubtedly desired to give as much liberty to religious dissidents as public opinion would allow.

It was about this time that Fox had his second interview with the great Protector. It happened that when the Friends were entering London on their return from their long western journey, as they came near Hyde Park they saw a great concourse of people, and in the heart of the throng the Lord Protector riding in his coach. Fox spurred his steed and rode up to the carriage. The life-guards who were riding alongside of it were jostling him away, when Cromwell looked forth and said, "Let him come." So he rode alongside as far as the entrance into St. James's Park, discoursing of Cromwell's own spiritual state, of the sufferings of Friends in the prisons of the Commonwealth, and the contrast between all this persecution for matters of religion and the spirit of Christ and His apostles. At parting, Cromwell desired him to visit him at Whitehall, and when he returned to his palace, he told one of

his wife's maids, a Quakeress named Mary Saunders, that he had good news for her—"George Fox was come back to London, and had ridden with him from Hyde Park to St. James's."

Shortly after, Fox went with his friend Pyot to call on the Protector at Whitehall. The great Independent John Owen, at this time Dean of Christ Church, and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, was closeted with the Protector, and one can see that his presence was not conducive to that open heart-to-heart intercourse which there had once been between the two men. Fox spoke about the Light of Christ. Cromwell got into a theological discussion, whether there were anything more in this than the natural light of conscience. Fox, feeling the Divine *afflatus* strong upon him, urged Cromwell repeatedly, and with strong emotion, "to lay down his crown at the feet of Jesus." Cromwell was in an unsympathetic vein, came and sat upon a high table by Fox's side, and said in a light, joking way, "I will be as high as you are." "Thus he continued speaking against the Light of Christ Jesus, and went away in a light manner. But the Lord's power came over him, so that when he came to his wife and other company, he said, 'I never parted so from them before,' for he was judged in himself."

After this interview Fox made a circuit through the home counties, as well as the northern shires of Lincoln and York; he had a large meeting near the battle-field of Edgehill, and he experienced the rudeness of the scholars at Oxford. In these travels he was endeavouring to fulfil a commission which, as he felt, was entrusted to him while he was still cooped up in Launceston Gaol. The first promulgation of his doctrines

in most parts of England was now accomplished—"the truth was now spread, and finely planted in most places," and his present business was "to answer and remove out of the minds of people some objections which the envious priests and professors had raised and spread abroad concerning us. For what Christ said of false prophets and anti-christs coming in the last days, they applied to us, and said 'We were they.'" Probably we may trace in this passage also some evidence of the effect produced on Fox's own mind by James Naylor's claim to Messiahship.

In the next year (1657) Fox broke new ground by making visitations to Wales and Scotland. Wales resembled Cornwall in the strength of its Royalism, as it was to resemble it a century later in the fervour of its Methodism. Apparently, however, Fox's preaching in the Principality was more successful than it had been in Cornwall.[1] He was accompanied by a Welshman, named John-ap-John, who could speak the Cymric tongue, evidently a fervid and fearless man, and one who, strange to say, surpassed even Fox himself in his power of arousing the opposition of "priests" and magistrates. At several towns we hear of ap-John as being thrown into prison, while Fox is still at liberty, but he appears to have been generally liberated after confinement for a day or two. At Brecknock, John-ap-John preached to the people in the streets, no doubt using the Welsh language. Fox went forth for one of his usual meditative walks in the fields, and when he returned found the whole town in an uproar. His room in the inn was

[1] The small number of Friends now to be found in Wales is, I believe, to be accounted for by the very large migrations thence to Pennsylvania. It had a considerable Quaker population at the close of the seventeenth century.

full of people, all talking Welsh, but who at his request spoke in English, and much discourse they had together. At nightfall, the magistrates—so Fox believed—gathered a multitude of people together in the streets, and bade them shout, making such a noise as Fox had never before heard. The wild clamour continued for two hours, and reminded Fox of the similar scene enacted by Diana's craftsmen at Ephesus. Probably the fact that many of the people were shouting in Welsh made the noise seem to Fox more meaningless than it really was. He was a true Englishman, and evidently had an instinctive feeling that English was the proper language for a reasonable being to use.

Thus at Dolgelly, when John-ap-John's street preaching had gathered a multitude round him, he says, "there being two Independent priests in the town, they came out and discoursed with him together. I went up to them, and finding them speaking in Welsh I asked them, 'What was the subject they spoke upon, and why were they not more moderate, and spake not one by one? For the things of God,' I told them, 'were weighty, and they should speak of them with fear and reverence.' Then I desired them to speak in English, that I might discourse with them, and they did so." The discussion turned on the nature of the "light within," which the Independents, like Cromwell their chief, declared to be "a created, natural-made light," while Fox maintained it to be heavenly, divine, and God-enkindled.

At Tenby, Fox had a curious argument with an official whom he calls the governor, and who had, as usual, thrown John-ap-John into prison.

"Why had he done this?" Fox asked.

Governor. "For standing with his hat on in church."

G. F. "Had not the priest two caps on his head, a black one and a white one? Cut off the brims of the hat, and then my friend would have but one; and the brims of the hat are but to defend him from the weather."

Governor. "These are frivolous things."

G. F. "Why then dost thou cast my friend into prison for such frivolous things?"

Governor. "Do you own Election and Reprobation?"

G. F. "Yes; and thou art in the Reprobation."

Governor (in a rage). "I will send you to prison till you prove it."

G. F. "I will prove it quickly, if thou wilt confess truth. Are not wrath, fury, rage, and persecution marks of reprobation? Did Christ and His disciples ever persecute or imprison any?"

"Then," says Fox, "the governor fairly confessed that he had too much wrath, haste, and passion in him. I told him Esau was up in him, the first birth, not Jacob, the second birth. The Lord's power so reached and came over him that he confessed to truth; and the other justice came and shook me kindly by the hand.

"As I was passing away, I was moved to speak to the governor again, and he invited me to dine with him, and set my friend at liberty. I went back to the other justice's house, and after some time the mayor and his wife, and the justice and his wife, and divers other Friends of the town went about half-a-mile with us to the water-side, and there, when we parted from them, I was moved of the Lord to kneel down with them and pray to the Lord to preserve them. So after I had recommended them to the Lord Jesus

Christ their Saviour and free teacher, we passed away in the Lord's power, and the Lord had the glory. A meeting continues in that town to this day."

Fox's opinion of the moral condition of the inhabitants of the Principality was generally somewhat unfavourable. The people of Haverfordwest, he says, "were a kind of Independents, but it was a wicked town and false. We bade the innkeeper give our horses a peck of oats; and no sooner had we turned our backs than the oats were stolen from our horses." Again at another great town (the name of which he seems to have forgotten)—"In that inn also I turned but my back to the man that was giving oats to my horse, and looking round again, I observed he was filling his pockets with the provender. A wicked, thievish people, to rob the poor dumb creature of his food. I would rather they had robbed me."

The scene at the Straits of Menai brings vividly before us the change which has been wrought in that region by the genius of Telford and Stephenson. It need not be said that there was then no bridge across the stormy straits. "Next day being market-day, we were to cross a great water, and not far from the place where we were to take boat, many of the market people drew to us, amongst whom we had good service for the Lord, declaring the word of life and everlasting truth unto them. . . . After the Lord's truth had been declared unto them in the power of God, and Christ the free teacher set over all hireling teachers, I bid John-ap-John get his horse into the boat, which was then ready. But there having got into it a company of wild gentlemen, as they called them, whom we found very rude, and far from gentleness, they with others

kept his horse out of the boat. I rode to the boat's side and spoke to them, showing them what unmanly and unchristian conduct it was; and told them they showed an unworthy spirit below Christianity or humanity. As I spoke, I leaped my horse into the boat amongst them, thinking John's horse would have followed when he had seen mine go in before him; but the water being deep, John could not get his horse into the boat. Wherefore I leaped out again on horseback into the water, and stayed with John on that side till the boat returned. There we tarried from eleven in the forenoon to two in the afternoon before the boat came to fetch us; and then we had forty-two miles to ride that evening; and when we had paid for our passage we had but one groat left between us in money."

How the difficulty as to their short supply of cash was surmounted Fox does not inform us. The passage above quoted, and several other slight indications of the same kind, make one think that Fox, who had been a country-bred lad, was a skilful and fearless horseman. The word "unmanly" is a favourite word with him when he is denouncing cowardice or cruelty, and everything about him seems to show that with all his almost fastidious conscientiousness he was no tender and unpractical recluse, but a full-blooded, courageous, manly man.

I have room for only one more anecdote about this Welsh journey, and it relates to the ridiculous prejudice about his long hair. It was at Wrexham that "one called a lady" sent for him. She kept a domestic chaplain, or as Fox says "a preacher," in her house; but he found both great lady and preacher "very light

and airy, too light to receive the weighty things of God." In her lightness she came and asked Fox if she should cut his hair, but received instead a grave admonition to cut down her own corruptions by the sword of the Spirit of God. So the Friends passed away from the house; but Fox heard afterwards that "she boasted in her frothy mind that she had come behind him and cut off the curl of his hair, but she spoke falsely."

Thus ended the Wesh journey. "Very weary we were with travelling so hard up and down in Wales: and in many places we found it difficult to get meat either for our horses or ourselves."

More than ever welcome, after these rough and hard journeyings, must have been the repose of hospitable Swarthmoor, whither the travellers directed their steps, riding through Cheshire and Lancashire, and over the sands into Furness.

After enjoying a few months' respite from travel, George Fox, who "had for some time felt drawings on his spirit to go into Scotland," crossed the border and entered that country. He had with him a friend named Robert Widders, whom he describes as "a thundering man against hypocrisy, deceit, and the rottenness of the priests." His first interview in Scotland was with an unnamed nobleman, and is described by him in the following words:—

"The first night we came into Scotland, we lodged at an inn. The innkeeper told us an Earl lived about a quarter of a mile off who had a desire to see me, and had left word at his house that if ever I came into Scotland he should send him word. He told us there were three drawbridges to his house, and that

it would be nine o'clock before the third bridge was drawn. Finding we had time in the evening we walked to his house. He received us very lovingly, and said he would have gone with us on our journey, but he was previously engaged to go to a funeral. After we had spent some time with him, we parted very friendly and returned to our inn." It would be interesting to discover who was this friendly nobleman. Was it forgetfulness, or a desire not to expose him to persecution, which prevented Fox from mentioning his name?[1]

Scotland in 1657, held down under the stern rule of Cromwell, outwardly peaceable, but sore at heart, clinging more tightly than ever to its Calvinistic creed and its Presbyterian discipline, was no favourable ground for the reception of Fox's anti-Calvinistic teaching. Almost immediately on entering the country he became engaged in a dispute with the ministers on the central doctrine of Calvinism. "Now," as he says, "the priests had frightened the people with the doctrine of election and reprobation, telling them that God had ordained the greatest part of men and women for hell, and that, let them pray or preach or sing, or do what they could, it was all to no purpose if they were ordained for hell; that God had a certain number elected for heaven, let them do what they would, as David, an adulterer, and Paul, a persecutor, yet elected vessels for heaven. So the fault was not at all in the creature less or more, but God had ordained it so." Against this terrible doctrine Fox protested with all

[1] From the geographical indications I am disposed to suggest Caerlaverock Castle, the abode of the Earl of Nithsdale, as the scene of this interview.

the energy of his soul, pleading the world-wide character of Christ's commission, "Go preach the gospel to all nations": which is the gospel of salvation. "He would not have sent them into all nations to preach the doctrine of salvation, if the greater part of men had been ordained for hell;" pleading also the benefits of Christ's death as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; and his own favourite text, "That was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

The tidings of Fox's arrival, and the fear that he would "spoil" their hearers, as they heard that he had "spoiled all the honest men and women in England already," roused the Scottish ministers to strenuous opposition. According to Fox, they drew up a number of curses, which were to be read aloud in all the churches, and to which the people were to thunder out their "Amens," after the manner of the Israelites on Mount Ebal.

The first was, "Cursed is he that saith 'Every man hath a light within him sufficient to lead him into salvation'; and let all the people say Amen."

The second, "Cursed is he that saith 'Faith is without sin' [no doubt an allusion to Fox's teaching about perfection]; and let all the people say Amen."

The third, "Cursed is he that denieth the Sabbath day; and let all the people say Amen."

Fox dryly remarks on the last sentence, "In this last they make the people curse themselves: for on the Sabbath day (which is the seventh day of the week, which the Jews kept by the command of God to them) they kept markets and fairs, and so brought the curse upon their own heads."

After visiting several other places in the south of Scotland, Fox came to Edinburgh and preached there. Many officers of the army, which was stationed at Leith, came with their wives to hear him, and were convinced by his words. A cry for protection against the new doctrines, and especially against the announcement that the Gospel ought to be preached without charge, went up to the Protector's Council in London from the clergy in Edinburgh. The result was an order that he should appear before "his Highness's Council in Edinburgh." He obeyed the summons; the doorkeeper took off his hat, and hung it up, and he went in and stood before the Council. "When I had stood awhile," he says, "and they had said nothing to me, I was moved of the Lord to say, 'Peace be amongst you; wait in the fear of God, that ye may receive His wisdom from above, by which all things were made and created; that by it ye may all be ordered, and may order all things under your hands to God's glory.'"

The Council questioned him as to the reason of his visit to Scotland, and he answered, "that he had come to visit the seed of God which had long lain under corruption, and that all in that nation that professed the Scriptures might come to the light, Spirit, and power that they were in who gave them forth." The result of the interview was an order that Fox should "depart the nation of Scotland by that day sen-night." Evidently the Protector's Council, while checking the persecuting tendencies of the Presbyterian clergy, were anxious not to have the precarious peace of Scotland disturbed by the preaching of English "sectaries."

Fox, however, stayed on in Scotland, and told his friends that he should stay, though the Council issued

a cart-load of warrants against him. He left Edinburgh, however, and travelled up and down through the Lowlands, having some strange adventures—with robbers lurking behind bushes, whom his bold address daunted —with Highlanders "who were so devilish that they ran at us with pitchforks, and had like to have spoiled us and our horses"—with some Baptists, "vain janglers and disputers," who being vanquished in argument went and informed the governor of the town. He sent a whole company of soldiers to march Fox and his three companions out of the place. "As they guarded us out of the town, James Lancaster [one of the three] was moved to sing with a melodious sound in the power of God; and I was moved to proclaim the day of the Lord, and to preach the everlasting gospel to the people. For they generally came forth, so that the streets were filled with them; and the soldiers were so ashamed that they said, 'they would rather have gone to Jamaica than have guarded us so.' But we were put into a boat with our horses, carried over the water, and then left. The Baptists who were the cause of our being put out of this town were themselves not long after turned out of the army; and he that was then governor was discarded also when the King came in."

Lastly, before leaving Scotland, Fox determined to return to Edinburgh, where he knew that there were warrants out for his apprehension. He and his friend Robert Widders, passing two sentries, rode up the street to the market-place, by the main guard, out at the gate, by the third sentry, and so clear out at the suburbs. "Now I saw and felt," he says, "that we had rode as it were against the cannon's mouth or the

sword's point; but the Lord's power and immediate hand carried us over the heads of them all." The next day being Sunday, he re-entered the city and had "a glorious meeting at which many officers and soldiers were present." Thence to Dunbar (still trembling at the recollection of another Englishman, who seven years before had refused to depart from the nation of Scotland when summoned to do so by the Committee of Estates), and here Fox had a meeting in the churchyard, while the minister was giving an orthodox "lecture" in the church. "Friends were so full, and their voices so high in the power of God, that the priest could do little in the steeple-house, but came quickly out again, stood awhile, and then went his way."

"This," Fox says, "was the last meeting I had in Scotland. The truth and the power of God was set over that nation . . . . There is since a great increase, and great there will be in Scotland. For when first I set my horse's feet upon Scottish ground, I felt the seed of God to sparkle about me like innumerable sparks of fire. Not but that there is abundance of thick, cloddy earth of hypocrisy and falseness above, and a briery, brambly nature which is to be burned up with God's Word, and ploughed up with His spiritual plough, before God's seed brings forth heavenly and spiritual fruit to His glory. But the husbandman is to wait in patience." [1]

[1] The reader may be interested in comparing these words of Fox with the opinions of Cromwell and an unnamed officer of his army on the moral condition of Scotland, as given in Carlyle's *Cromwell*, Letter CXLIX., and Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth*, i. 379.

CHAPTER XI

THE END OF THE PROTECTORATE

THE three years following Fox's return from Scotland (1657-1659) were years of strange, exciting, and perplexing events in the political world, of which we get fitful glances in the pages of his *Journal*. He himself, except for an interval of some weeks, during which he was laid by with sickness at Reading, was engaged in his usual work, travelling up and down the country, holding religious discussions, addressing meetings of his followers, and putting forth "papers" on various subjects on which he was moved to exhort his fellow-countrymen.

(1) Of the discussions, one of the most interesting was that which he held with a Jesuit who was in the train of the Spanish Ambassador. The discussion, which was the result of a challenge from the Jesuit took place in the town mansion of the Earl of Newport, not far from St. Martin's Lane. The challenger at first proposed to meet twelve of the wisest and most learned men among the Quakers; then he came down to six; then he sent word that there must be but three, on which, as Fox slyly says, "We hastened what we could, lest, after all his great boast, he should put it quite off at last." There were some of the usual arguments

about transubstantiation, materialist replies to a materialist theory. "Seeing the bread is immortal and divine . . . let a meeting be appointed between some of them (whom the Pope and his cardinals should appoint) and some of us; and let a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread be brought and divided, each into two parts, and let them consecrate which of these parts they would. And then set the consecrated and the unconsecrated bread and wine in a safe place, with a sure watch upon it, and let trial thus be made: whether the consecrated bread and wine would not lose its goodness, and the bread grow dry and mouldy, and the wine turn dead and sour, as well and as soon as that which was unconsecrated."

A more interesting part of the discussion was that which turned on the relative authority of the Scriptures and tradition. It might have been thought that Fox, who had so often argued against the undue exaltation of the Scriptures as the sole guide of life, would here have been at a disadvantage, but he defended the Protestant position not unsuccessfully. The Jesuit distinguished between "the written word," or the Scriptures, and "the unwritten word, those things that the apostles spake by word of mouth, and which are those traditions that we practise."

"Scripture proof of this?" asked Fox. "Read II. Thessalonians ii. 5," said the Jesuit. "When I was with you I told you these things." "That is," said he [in effect, doubtless, not in so many words], "I told you of nunneries and monasteries, and of putting to death for religion, and of praying by beads and to images, and all the rest of the practices of the Church of Rome, which was the unwritten word of the apostles, which

they told them, and have since been continued down by tradition unto these times." Fox had not much difficulty in disposing of such an argument as this. He desired his opponent to read that Scripture again, and see how the apostle there alluded not to any such portentous deposit of doctrine outside of the written word, "but to the coming of the Man of Sin, the son of perdition." Fox did not himself press home, as a Puritan divine would have done, the identification of the Man of Sin with the Pope, but undoubtedly the Jesuit understood the significant allusion. Of course neither party in the slightest degree convinced the other, but Fox's comment on the whole is, "Thus we parted, and his subtilty was comprehended by simplicity."

(2) The most important of the meetings to which I have referred, was one held at Luton[1] in Bedfordshire, and was a gathering of the members of the new sect from all parts of the country. This was called a "General Yearly Meeting," and was either the first or one of the first of a series of Quaker Parliaments, which have since been held without interruption for nearly two centuries and a half.[2] "The meeting lasted three

[1] "At John Crook's house," which we learn from a previous entry in the *Journal* (I. 225) was at Luton.

[2] From a very early date in the history of the Society these annual synods have been held in London, first at Gracechurch St., and of later times at a large meeting-house in Bishopsgate, called Devonshire House. There is one assembly of men, and another of women (the latter of more recent institution than the former), and the numbers vary from two or three hundred to something like two thousand. There is a system of representation, but others besides the regularly appointed representatives are allowed to take part in the proceedings. The presiding officer is called the Clerk, and is elected annually, but generally holds office for some years. No expressions of applause or disapproba-

days, and many Friends from most parts of the nation came to it, so that the inns and towns around were filled. And although," Fox continues, "there was some disturbance by rude people that had run out from truth, yet the Lord's power came over all, and a glorious meeting it was." Fox delivered two long and impressive, though not argumentative sermons, one of which seems to have been intended for those among the hearers who were yet unconvinced of his principles, while the other was addressed to his professed followers, and contained many valuable hints as to the regulation of the ministry (all, of course, voluntary and unpaid), which was beginning to be exercised abundantly in all the meetings of the new Society. "Take heed of many words." "That which cometh from the [Divine] life, and is received from God, reaches to the life, and settles others in the life, for the work is not now as it was at first; the work now is to settle and stay in the life." "The ministers who travel must for their own particular growth dwell in the life, which doth open, and that will keep down that which would boast." "The minister should first know his own spirit, and then he may know others." "Keep down, keep low, that nothing may reign in you but life itself." "Friends must have patience [with disputers], must wait in patience in the cool life, and he who is in this hath the tasting of the Lamb's power and authority." "Therefore all Friends keep cool and quiet in the power of

tion are allowed, and there is no voting, strictly so called. Speakers deliver short statements of their opinions on one side or another, and the Clerk, in deciding on the sense of the meeting, is allowed, and indeed expected to pay some regard to the maxim, "Sententiae ponderantur non numerantur." Practically one hardly ever hears of these decisions being called in question.

the Lord God, and all that is contrary will be subjected; the Lamb hath the victory through the [Heavenly] Seed, through the patience [of the saints]." With many such words of cheer and counsel Fox addressed the first Quaker Convocation.

(3) Of the "papers" published by Fox at this time, one of the most interesting is that addressed to the wreckers in Cornwall. Like almost all that proceeded from his pen, it has no graces of style, but it is full of that zeal for righteousness, for righteous doing as distinct from pious talking, which is characteristic of all George Fox's utterances, and which certainly had something to do with the opposition which he encountered.

Fox's own account of the practices against which he protested is as follows:—"While I was in Cornwall" [this was on his second visit to the county, in 1659] "there were great shipwrecks about the Land's End. Now it was the custom of that country, that at such a time both rich and poor went out to get as much of the wreck as they could, not caring to save the people's lives; and in some places they call shipwrecks 'God's grace.'[1] These things troubled me: it grieved my spirit to hear of such unchristian actions, considering how far they were below the heathen at Melita, who received Paul, made him a fire, and were courteous towards him, and them that had suffered shipwreck with him. Wherefore I was moved to write a paper and send it to all the parishes, priests, and magistrates, to reprove them for such greedy actions, and to warn and exhort them that, if they would assist to save people's

[1] The fouler charge against the Cornishmen, that they actually caused shipwrecks by displaying false lights on the shore, and so forth, is not noticed by Fox, and may probably be set down as a myth of later times.

lives, and preserve their ships and goods, they should use diligence therein ; and consider if it had been their own condition, they would judge it hard if they should be upon a wreck, and people should strive to get what they could from them and not regard their lives." One feels that there is in these words the germ of those noble institutions the Life-boat and the Life-saving Brigade, which are among the best contributions that the nineteenth century has made to the practical exposition of Christianity.

At the close of the paper is a postscript addressed more especially to Friends, exhorting them to "keep out of the ravenous world's spirit which leads to destroy, and which is out of the wisdom of God. When ships are wrecked, do not run to destroy and make havoc of ship and goods with the world, but to save the men and the goods for them, and so deny yourselves and do unto them as ye would that they should do unto you."

While Fox was thus moving up and down the country, and working according to his light for the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Commonwealth, which, as the Puritan hoped, was to have been the earthly realization of that heavenly state, was falling asunder into ruin, and another kingdom of a very different kind was being set up once more in England.

I will collect here the notices, few but interesting, which we find in Fox's *Journal* of the events which led up to the Restoration.

Proposed Kingship of Cromwell. "There was also a rumour about this time" (April—May 1657) "of making Cromwell king : whereupon I was moved to

go to him, and warned him against it and of divers dangers, which if he did not avoid he would bring a shame and ruin upon himself and his posterity. He seemed to take well what I said to him, and thanked me: yet afterwards I was moved to write to him more fully concerning that matter."

Sickness of Lady Claypole. The story of Oliver's love for this, his favourite daughter, and of his grief for her death, which happened so shortly before his own, is well known. Elizabeth Claypole was his sixth child, and was born in 1629. She was therefore five years younger than Fox. She was married when about seventeen to John Claypole, a Northamptonshire gentleman, whom his father-in-law made first a baronet and then a lord, whence his wife's title of Lady Claypole. For many months apparently, in 1658, she lay sick, stricken by a lingering and fatal malady. Fox says—"About this time the Lady Claypole, so called, was sick and much troubled in mind, and could receive no comfort from any that came to her: which when I heard of I was moved to write to her the following letter." The letter, which is shorter than many of its kind, as befitted the delicate state of the receiver, is loving and tender, but contains no very striking thoughts. Apparently the strident voice of the enthusiastic preacher is softened, till the speaker himself can hardly recognize it, by the silence of the sick-room. He exhorts the dying lady to be still and cool in her own mind and spirit from her own thoughts, desires, and imaginations, and to be staid in the principle of God within her, that it may raise her mind up to God, whom she will find to be a God at hand, and a very present help in time of trouble. The letter ends, "So

in the name and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty strengthen thee. G. F."

"When the foregoing paper," he continues, "was read to Lady Claypole, she said it stayed her mind for the present. Afterwards many Friends got copies of it, both in England and Ireland, and read it to people that were troubled in mind, and it was made useful for the settling of the minds of several."

Cromwell's last days. The death of Lady Claypole happened on August 6. A fortnight later[1] Fox, after describing a short detention which he and two of his companions suffered at the hands of two of Colonel Hacker's troopers, and their speedy liberation, continues:—

"The same day, taking boat, I went to Kingston, and thence to Hampton Court to speak with the Protector about the sufferings of Friends. I met him riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his life-guard, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him; and when I came to him, he looked like a dead man. After I had laid the sufferings of Friends before him, and had warned him according as I was moved to speak to him, he bade me come to his house. So I returned to Kingston, and next day went to Hampton Court to speak further with him. But when I came he was sick, and Harvey, who was one that waited on him [groom of the bedchamber], told me the doctors were not willing that I should speak with him. So I passed

[1] Friday the twentieth of August 1658 is the date assigned by Carlyle to this interview. He says justly enough, "George dates nothing, and his facts everywhere lie round him like the leather parings of his old shop, but we judge it may have been" the day mentioned above.

away and never saw him more." It was a fortnight after this interview, on the well-known date, the 3rd of September, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, that the spirit of that noble and much calumniated Englishman went forth from the world.

Anarchy after Cromwell's death. That ineffectual cipher of a sovereign, Richard Cromwell, makes as little impression on the pages of Fox's *Journal* as elsewhere in history. Fox himself, as I have said, was laid up for several weeks with sore sickness at Reading. His countenance was altered; he looked poor and thin, and was tempted to think that the plagues of God were upon him. Soon, however, he recovered his health and vigorous appearance, and returned to London, where, as he says—

"Now there was a great pudder (agitation) made about the image or effigy of Oliver Cromwell lying in state: men standing and sounding with trumpets over his image after he was dead. At this my spirit was greatly grieved, and the Lord I feared was highly offended."[1] He wrote a short paper of protest against this pageant, and told the authorities that "the sober people in these nations stood amazed at their doings, and were ashamed, as if they would bring in Popery."

As he truly says, at this time "there was great confusion and distraction amongst the people, and powers were plucking each other to pieces." He addressed an earnest warning to his followers to "keep out of all the bustlings in the world, to meddle not with the

[1] Cromwell's effigy, robed in purple, was taken to Westminster Abbey on the twenty-third of November, seventy-four days after his death. His embalmed body had been buried there a short time before. Fox's return to London must therefore have taken place not later than the close of November.

powers of the earth, but mind the Kingdom, the way of peace." I have already[1] quoted the passage in which Fox describes the agitation consequent on Sir George Booth's premature Royalist outbreak (August 1659), and the exhortations which he then addressed to his followers warning them against taking part in such commotions. So, apart from all the "bustlings of the world," Fox moves about his appointed sphere of labour, visits Norwich, where he has a hot dispute with a clergyman named Townsend; visits Cornwall, where, as we saw, he writes a paper against the wreckers; visits Tewkesbury and Worcester, and groans over the excesses which accompanied the General Election (April 1660). "In all my time," he says, "I never saw the like drunkenness as in the towns, for they had been choosing Parliament-men. At Worcester, the Lord's truth was set over all, people were finely settled therein, and Friends praised the Lord; nay I saw the very earth rejoiced. Yet great fears and troubles were in many people, and a looking for the King's coming in, and all things being altered. They would ask me what I thought of times and things. I told them the Lord's power was over all, and His light shone over all; that fear would take hold only on the hypocrites, such as had not been faithful to God, and on our persecutors."

About *General Monk*, the adroit actor in the transformation-scene from Republic to Monarchy, Fox had written these words, describing the impression produced upon him by the General during his own visit to Scotland (1657)—"And I saw General Monk that he was as a man that bowed under O. P., and had a covering over

[1] p. 44.

him; and take away that covering and then he was the man as he was before [Royalist], as he did fulfil it in a few years after." [1]

After all, the great event of May 29, 1660, the celebrated Oak Apple Day, when Charles II. recovered the throne of his forefathers, passes absolutely unnoticed in Fox's *Journal*. It is only at the time of his next conflict with the authorities, which happened at Lancaster, that we find he is accused, in the *mittimus* which commits him to prison, of being "a disturber of the peace of the nation, and an enemy to the King," and then we know that the Restoration is accomplished and that "the King enjoys his own again."

Posthumous insults to the Protector. Not the worst, but one of the most contemptible actions of the triumphant Royalism was the ghoul-like vengeance wreaked on the bodies of the dead hero and his companions. On January 30, 1661 (the twelfth anniversary of King Charles's execution), the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, which had been dug up out of their graves at Westminster, were drawn in sledges to Tyburn, hung there till sunset, and were then beheaded. The "loathsome trunks," says the Royalist scribe, "were thrown into a deep hole under the gallows, and the three heads were set up by the hangman on poles on the top of Westminster Hall." The ghastly sight awoke strange memories in the mind of Fox, who in connection therewith gives us a singular story (unknown, I believe, to any other author), of Oliver's vows on the eve of the battle of Dunbar.

[1] This passage, which is in the MS. Journal, was omitted in the printed copies. Probably Ellwood thought it inexpedient to publish it.

"Though O. C. at Dunbar fight had promised to the Lord, that if He gave him the victory over his enemies he would take away tithes, etc., or else let him be rolled into his grave with infamy; but when the Lord had given him victory, and he came to be chief, he confirmed the former laws, that if people did not set forth their tithe they should pay treble, and this to be executed by two Justices of Peace in the country, upon the oath of two witnesses. But when the King came in they took him up and hanged him, and buried him under Tyburn, where he was rolled into his grave with infamy. And when I saw him hanging, then I saw his word justly come upon him."[1]

On a review of all the notices of Cromwell's actions contained in the *Journal*, one feels that Fox hardly did justice to his character, and especially to his genuine desire for toleration all round, except to the Roman Catholics. Fox seems to have thought that the Protector had only to say the word, and all the doors of the prisons wherein Friends were confined would fly open. But, autocrat as Cromwell was, he ruled only by the favour of the army and the Independent party,

[1] This interesting passage is to be found in the MS. Journal, a little after the account of Fox's release from Lancaster Gaol, but is omitted from all the printed editions. Probably Ellwood and his co-editors thought that it bore too hardly on Cromwell's memory. It comes in just before the sentence, "And there being about seven hundred Friends in prison." Vol. I. p. 490 (ed. 1892). The expression about "being rolled into the grave with infamy" occurs in the celebrated speech addressed to Oliver's first Parliament, September 12, 1654. Fox was probably mistaken in connecting it in any way with the abolition of tithes. The alternative in Cromwell's speech was "the wilful throwing away of this Government so owned of God"; in other words, his abdication of the Protectorate.

and though these were in the main disposed to toleration, there was always in their eyes a fringe of eccentric and heterodox sects outside the circle of respectable Christianity, which it was not wise or safe to tolerate. Did the Quakers belong to this zone of intolerable sectaries or no? Cromwell himself, and the more enlightened of his counsellors, probably thought that they did not, but there was many an enthusiastic trooper in his army who thought that they did, and who would have held that great occasion was given to the enemy to blaspheme by announcing that no Quaker was to be molested for preaching the Inward Light, or refusing the oath of fidelity to the Commonwealth. All this limited Cromwell's power to assist a body of men whom he probably thought hot-headed and quarrelsome, but whom he perceived to have a grasp of some spiritual truths, the promulgation of which could not but be of benefit to the nation. Fox, however, who saw the persecution, did not perceive the restraining hand held over it by the Protector.

> "What's done we partly may compute,
> We know not what's resisted."

CHAPTER XII

THE STUARTS AND THE QUAKERS

IMPRISONMENTS AT LANCASTER AND SCARBRO'

THE reign of the Saints was over, and the reign of the Sinners had begun. No more would be heard the psalm chanted by thousands of manly voices on the eve of desperate battle. Such old-world sounds as these were to be replaced by the rattle of the dice-box and the light laugh of the courtesan, for "our most religious and gracious king," Charles Stuart the younger, had set up his harem in Whitehall, where lately Cromwell had dictated his letters to Milton, and his commands to Europe. Before returning to claim his father's throne, Charles II. had published the celebrated "Declaration" from Breda, in which he promised to grant "liberty of conscience, so that no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which did not concern the peace of the kingdom, and to consent to such Acts of Parliament as should be offered him for confirming that indulgence." How Charles kept this promise all the world knows. Except when Mary was kindling the fires of Smithfield, or when Elizabeth was waging her most ruthless war against the adherents of the old faith, there is perhaps

no period of English history in which the rights of conscience were more atrociously invaded, or men and women more tyrannically "called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which did not concern the peace of the kingdom," than during the reign of Charles II. Three laws which disgraced the English statute book in this reign stand out in bad pre-eminence as the most conspicuous violations of the virtual compact between the returning King and his subjects.

1. *The Act of Uniformity* (May 19, 1662), by which all clergymen were compelled to declare their unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, on pain of forfeiting all their "spiritual promotions." In obedience to this Act, as every one knows, about two thousand Puritan ministers were ejected from their parsonages on St. Bartholomew's Day (August 24, 1662), and had to begin the world anew, without even the slender provision of one-fifth of their late incomes which had been left to the Anglican clergy by the Long Parliament when they were ejected for refusing to take the Covenant.

2. *The Conventicle Act* (May 17, 1664), which is thus described in the words of its promoters—"The first offence of being in a Conventicle or meeting of more than five persons in addition to members of a family for any religious purpose not in conformity with the Church of England, we have made punishable only with a small fine of £5, or three months' imprisonment, and £10 for a peer. The second offence with £10, or six months' imprisonment, and £20 for a peer. But for the third offence—the party convicted shall be transported [for seven years] to some of your Majesty's

foreign plantations, unless he redeem himself by laying down £100."

3. *The Five Mile Act* (October 31, 1665) is perhaps the meanest and most spiteful of all the persecuting edicts that ever received the sanction of an English sovereign. As the ministers ejected on St. Bartholomew's Day still continued to earn a subsistence, however scanty, by turning school-master in their old age, it was enacted that no Nonconformist ex-minister or teacher, of what denomination soever, who had not taken the oath of passive obedience, should, "unless only in passing upon the road," come within five miles of any city or town corporate, or borough sending members to Parliament, or within the same distance of any parish or place where he had formerly preached or taught, under a penalty of £40 for every offence. And what was this oath of passive obedience? Not only to the effect that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatever to take arms against the King, but that the swearer *would not at any time endeavour any alteration of government in Church or State.* Almost all the Nonconformist ministers felt that they could not conscientiously make any such promise.

Of these three miserable Acts, the first and the last, as they affected primarily the beneficed clergymen of the Puritan party, did not greatly concern the Quakers.[1]

[1] In fact, George Fox's reflections on the religious revolution of St. Bartholomew's Day are almost like Isaiah's song of triumph over Babylon. "There was a secret hand in bringing this day [the Restoration] upon that hypocritical generation of professors, who being got into power, grew proud and haughty and cruel beyond others, and persecuted the people of God without pity. (I. 501.) I was moved to write to them [the fallen Puritans, who said 'it was all on account of us']. Did we ever resist them? Did we not give them our backs to beat, and our cheeks to pull off the hair, and our faces to spit on? Had not their priests that prompted them on to such work, pulled them with themselves

The second (the Conventicle Act) was the chief battle-ground on which the State came forth to fight them, and on which they eventually beat the State. Some of the other Nonconformists endeavoured by a harmless artifice to evade this cruel law. When they came to their meetings they would have "candles and tobacco-pipes, flagons of drink, cold meat and bread and cheese upon the table," and so when the officers of justice entered the room, it would be no religious conventicle, but a social party of jovial Englishmen that was going forward.[1] But the Quaker would stoop to no such artifice. And his worship, from its very simplicity and

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into the ditch? Why then would they say 'It was all on account of us,' when it was owing to themselves and their priests, their blind prophets, that followed their own spirits, and could foresee nothing of these times and things that were coming upon them, which we had long forewarned them of, as Jeremiah and Christ had forewarned Jerusalem? They had thought to weary us out and undo us, but they undid themselves." (I. 502.) "Many warnings of many sorts were Friends moved . . . . to give to that generation, which they not only rejected, but abused Friends, calling us giddy-headed Quakers; but God brought His judgments upon those persecuting priests and magistrates. For when the King came in, most of them were turned out of their places and benefices [St. Bartholomew's Day], and the spoilers were spoiled, and then we could ask them, 'Who were the giddy heads now?' Then many confessed we had been true prophets to the nation, and said, 'Had we cried against some priests only, they should have liked us then, but crying against all made them dislike us.' But now they saw those priests which were then looked upon to be the best were as bad as the rest. For indeed some of those that were counted the most eminent were the bitterest, and the greatest stirrers up of the magistrates to persecution; and it was a judgment upon them to be denied the free liberty of their consciences when the King came in, because when they were uppermost, they would not have liberty of conscience granted to others." (I. 504.)

[1] See the description of these Presbyterian *agapæ* in Fox's *Journal*, II. 86.

apparent baldness, was peculiarly hard to extirpate. There was no chalice, or Geneva gown, or hour-glass, or Bible, the removal of which would spoil the service. Professor Masson has well described the perplexity of the persecutors when brought face to face with "a Quaker's meeting, where men and women were worshipping with their hearts, and without implements, in silence as well as by speech. You may break in upon them, hoot at them, roar at them, drag them about; the meeting, if it is of any size, essentially still goes on till all the component individuals are murdered. Throw them out at the door in twos and threes, and they but re-enter at the window, and quietly resume their places. Pull their meeting-house down, and they re-assemble next day most punctually amid the broken walls and rafters. Shovel sand or earth down upon them, and there they still sit, a sight to see, musing immovably among the rubbish. This is no description from fancy. It was the actual practice of the Quakers all over the country. They held their meetings regularly, perseveringly, and without the least concealment, keeping the doors of their meeting-houses purposely open, that all might enter, informers, constables, or soldiers, and do whatever they chose. In fact, the Quakers behaved magnificently. By their peculiar method of open violation of the law, and passive resistance only, they rendered a service to the common cause of all the Nonconformist sects, which has never been sufficiently acknowledged. The authorities had begun to fear them as a kind of supernatural folk, and knew not what to do with them but cram them into gaols, and let them lie there. In fact the gaols in these days were less places of punishment for criminals, than receptacles for a great propor-

tion of what was bravest and most excellent in the manhood and womanhood of England."[1]

In addition to these three Acts, which were aimed at all who dissented from the worship of the Church of England, one was passed (May 2, 1662) which was specially directed against the Quakers. By this Act, which became law two years before the general Conventicle Act, it was provided that all Quakers, or other persons refusing to take an oath required by law, or maintaining the unlawfulness of oaths; and particularly all Quakers meeting for worship to the number of five or more, should be fined £5 for the first offence, and £10 for the second, with an alternative of three or six months' hard labour, and for the third offence should be banished to the Plantations.

And yet, notwithstanding all this oppression and tyranny, notwithstanding these scandalous violations of the promises which Charles II. had made at Breda, the hearts of his Quaker subjects still clung strangely to the restored King. This was partly because they believed, and rightly believed, that his own heart was not in the work of persecution. But beside this, there was the personal charm of the King's manner, the fascination which, good-for-nothing fellow that he was, he managed to throw over all who came in contact with him. Fox seems to have felt this charm, and to have been to some extent blinded by it. It is impossible to read the *Journal* without feeling that Charles II. receives much more favourable measure from the writer than Oliver Cromwell; and it is with a feeling of something like amusement that we find

[1] Masson's *Life of John Milton and History of his Time*, vi. 387-8.

George Fox writing to the King on his accession, not only to exhort him to exercise mercy and forgiveness towards his enemies (an admirable piece of advice), but also "to warn him to restrain the profaneness and looseness that had got up in the nation on his return." Charles II. restraining any exhibition of profaneness and looseness would indeed have been an instance of "the devil rebuking sin."

But on a review of the whole position of the Quakers at the time of the Restoration, and observing the persistent bitterness of their tone towards the prominent members of the old Calvinistic, Puritan party, one is brought to the conclusion that it required only a very little gentleness and reasonable consideration for their scruples, to have made of the new Society a real bulwark of the Stuart throne. They would have been not Royalists only, but (like William Penn) Jacobites also, if they had had any chance of developing their strong germs of loyal sentiment towards the throne. Members of the Church of England they could never have been, but they would have been the most amicable of dissenters from her communion, if they had not been harried with Conventicle Acts and penalties of *Præmunire*. Only the blind fury of the Cavalier squire and the Episcopalian parson turned these peaceable and loyal-hearted people into Hanoverian Whigs and "political dissenters."

Of this most unnecessary and ill-advised persecution, from men in whom he might reasonably have hoped to find friends, Fox was to have an early experience. It was probably in the very same month of May (1660), in which Charles II. entered London in triumph, that Fox once more sought the shelter of hospitable Swarth-

moor. The kindly master of the house had died nearly two years previously,[1] but his widow and her daughters were ready to give him whom they regarded as their spiritual father a loving welcome. Before he had been there many days, the chief constable and three petty constables tramped into the house with a warrant from Major Porter, Justice of the Peace and Mayor of Lancaster, for George Fox's apprehension. They marched him off to Ulverston, and deposited him for the night in the constable's house. There they sat, fifteen or sixteen rude, loud-talking men, keeping close watch upon their prisoner, and refusing to allow him any communication with his numerous friends in Ulverston, some of whom would gladly have brought him provisions for the night. So superstitious were these Lancashire peasants that some of the guard went and sat in the chimney-corner to prevent Fox flying away up the chimney! They bragged to one another about the capture they had effected, as if it had been an exploit of great bravery. "I did not think," said Constable Ashburnham, "that a thousand men could have taken this man prisoner." "Ah!" said Constable Mount, a very wicked man, "I would have served Judge Fell himself so, if he had been alive, and I had had a warrant to take him." Evidently these braggart constables were the men who would stick oak-leaves in their hats and cry, "Down with the Roundheads and the Rump."

Next morning at six, Fox, who was to be dragged off to a neighbouring justice, was putting on his boots and spurs, but the rough constables pulled off the spurs, picked his pocket of a knife, put him on another horse

[1] Judge Fell died October 8, 1658.

than his own, and set off, attended by many horsemen and a rabble of followers. About a quarter of a mile from Ulverston, some Friends with the Swarthmoor ladies in their company came forth to meet them. The stupid horsemen gathered round him in mad rage and fury, crying out, "Will they rescue him? will they rescue him?" Upon this Fox said, "Here is my hair; here is my back; here are my cheeks; strike me!" With these words their anger was a little assuaged. Then they brought a little horse, and clumsily lifting Fox, set him upon it behind the saddle, with nothing to hold on by, and led the horse by the halter. When they had got some distance out of the town, says Fox, "they beat the little horse, and made him kick and gallop; whereupon I slipped off him, and told them 'They should not abuse the creature.' They were much enraged at my getting off, and took me by the legs and feet and set me upon the same horse behind the saddle again, and so led it about two miles till they came to a great water. By this time my own horse was come to us, and the water being deep, and their little horse scarce able to carry me through, they let me get upon my own, through the persuasion of some of their own company, leading him through the water. One wicked fellow kneeled down, and lifting up his hands, blessed God that I was taken. When I was come over the sands, I told them I heard I had liberty to choose what justice I would go before; but Mount and the other constables cried, 'No, I should not.' Then they led me to Lancaster, about fourteen miles, and a great triumph they thought to have had; but as they led me I was moved to sing praises unto the Lord in His triumphing power over all."

When Fox was come to Lancaster, the spirits of the people being, as he says, "mightily up," in other words much excited, he stood and looked earnestly upon them, and they cried, "Look at his eyes!" This is one of many indications that there was something peculiarly piercing and even awful in the glance of Fox's eyes when he was in one of his high-wrought moods.

To tell the story of Fox's examination before "Justice Porter" would be to repeat much of what has been already said as to previous examinations. Enough that he was committed to prison, and put in the "Dark House" in Lancaster Castle, a miserable dungeon evidently, but not so horribly filthy as Doomsdale at Launceston. The head-gaoler seems to have been a reasonable man, but the under-gaoler was rude and cruel, and often would let him have no food but such as could be pushed in to him under the door.

However, Fox's imprisonment this time was not so long as on some previous occasions, lasting as it did only twenty weeks, from June 3 to October 25, 1660; and these twenty weeks included a journey up to London to plead for himself in the Court of King's Bench. Two causes combined to produce this comparatively early liberation—the courage of Margaret Fell, and the cowardice of "Justice Porter." The brave lady of Swarthmoor put forth a spirited protest "to all magistrates, concerning the wrongful taking up and imprisoning of George Fox at Lancaster." And not only so, but she went up to London in company with a Friend named Ann Curtis of Reading, whose father, when Sheriff of Bristol, had been hung before his own door for engaging in a Royalist conspiracy.[1]

[1] The person here alluded to was no doubt Robert Yeamans,

Such intercession as this the newly-returned King could not disregard, and he ordered the issue of a writ of *habeas corpus*, which resulted in George Fox's before-mentioned journey to London, and appearance before the Court of King's Bench. True, "Justice Porter" went also, with no little bounce and swagger, to London, declaring "that he would meet Mistress Fell in the gap." But when he got there he met some old Cavaliers whose houses he had plundered when he was a zealous Parliamentarian, and heard from them some disagreeable truths. Fox himself also wrote him a letter, in which he reminded him of stout words which he had used in old times against those that favoured the King, declaring that he would leave them neither dog nor cat if they did not bring him provision to Lancaster Castle. He asked him also, "Whose great buck's horns those were that were in his house, and where he had both them and the wainscot from, that he ceiled his house withal? Had he them not from Hornby Castle?" These allusions were too painful to a man who was only too anxious to obey the Apostolic precept about "forgetting the things that were behind." He quickly had enough of the Court, and returned into the country.

It was during this interval of Fox's detention in London that he witnessed the disgusting sight of the burning of the disentombed bodies of the dead regicides. The trial of the living regicides was still going forward, and when Fox was taken to the judge's chambers for an examination into his case, Sir Thomas Mallet, who

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Sheriff of Bristol in 1641-2, who in 1643 was hung opposite to his house in Wine Street for conspiring to deliver up the city to Prince Rupert.

was the judge chosen, was putting on his red gown in order to go into court and sit on the trial of some of these men. He was "very peevish and froward"—perhaps, though a staunch Royalist, he did not like the work on which he was engaged—and told Fox he might come another time. Eventually the trial took place before (1) the Chief Justice Sir Robert Foster, a harsh, narrow, black-letter lawyer, who had taken an active part in the disgraceful trial of Sir Harry Vane; (2) Judge Twisden, a learned lawyer and honest man, but extremely passionate; and (3) the above-mentioned Judge Mallet. The trial was a pretty fair one, though Judge Twisden lost his temper, and tried to scold Fox, as a year later he scolded John Bunyan; but Fox appealed, not unsuccessfully, to Foster and Mallet for protection. The critical point of the trial was the appearance of a Gentleman of the Bedchamber named Marsh, who signified to the judges the King's pleasure "that Fox should be set at liberty, seeing no accuser came up against him." By this time apparently Major Porter had returned crestfallen to his house at Lancaster. Accordingly Sir Thomas Mallet drew up an order for the prisoner's release, and on October 25, 1660, Fox was once more a free man.

The foolish outbreak of Venner and the Fifth Monarchy men (January 6, 1661) seems to have been a particularly feeble and frantic affair, one by which no strong government need have been troubled for an hour; yet it was made, most unjustly, a pretext for practically revoking all the promises of toleration contained in the King's Declaration from Breda. Fox himself was in London on the memorable Sunday night when this mad rush of the Fifth Monarchy men

set all London in an uproar. He heard the midnight cry, "Arm! arm!" and went with early morning through Whitehall to Pall Mall, where there was a meeting of Friends, and near which he had, it seems, a temporary lodging. He stayed here several days, often molested by the soldiers, who were bursting roughly into the houses of the citizens searching for arms. Probably he would have been again committed to prison, or cut down by the sword of some hot-headed trooper, had not the friendly courtier, whom he calls "Esquire Marsh," actually come and taken up his quarters in Fox's lodging in order to protect him, and obtained his liberation when the soldiers took him into temporary arrest.

Though Fox was earnest in his appeals to Friends not to get mixed up in the movements of the Fifth Monarchy fanatics, and addressed paper after paper to the Government to assure it of the absolute peaceableness of his followers, this outbreak was made the pretext for a raid of exceptional severity upon the Quakers. One such paper, addressed to the King, probably early in 1662, gives us some much-desired statistics as to the extent of the persecution. The results are these. "Under the changeable powers before thee" (as Fox styles the Commonwealth and the Protectorate), 3173 Friends had been arrested and imprisoned. Of these 32 had died in prison, 73 were still in confinement under process issued in the name of the Commonwealth, the rest had been liberated before or at the Restoration. But that was the account of a persecution spreading over something like ten years (1650—1660). Now in the space of less than two years from King Charles's accession there had

been imprisoned in his name, and by those who thought to ingratiate themselves with him, 3068 persons. "Besides this, our meetings are daily broken up by men with clubs and arms, though we meet peaceably according to the practice of God's people in the primitive times, and our friends are thrown into waters and trod upon, till the very blood gushes out of them, the number of which abuses can hardly be uttered."

The appeal to Charles II. was not altogether in vain. Though his was certainly not one of the "tender consciences" about which so much was said, he probably felt both the shame and the impolicy of flagrantly violating the compact made at Breda. Moreover, being himself a Roman Catholic at heart, he was conscious of a certain languid desire to obtain for his oppressed brother Romanists that little measure of toleration which, as he knew, could only be obtained by jumbling up their case with that of the Protestant Nonconformists. Accordingly, on December 26, 1662, he put forth a Declaration, in which, reminding himself of his promises from Breda, he "renewed to his subjects concerned in those promises of indulgence, the assurance that he would make it his especial care, without invading the freedom of Parliament, to incline their wisdom to join with him in making some Act for the relief of those, who living peaceably did not conform to the Church of England, through scruple or tenderness of misguided conscience." Unfortunately the religious rancour of the Cavalier Parliament, whose members in the abused name of the Christian religion were indulging all those passions of hatred and revenge which Christ came to banish from the earth, would not

allow the King to frame any effectual Toleration Act, but it was something that the weight of his name should thus be thrown on the side of mercy. It is probably not a mere coincidence that Fox's imprisonment (the sixth of the series), which took place at Leicester this year, was of exceptionally short duration. It was severe enough while it lasted, for the gaoler was "a very wicked, cruel man," but some little mitigation was obtained by appealing to the avarice of his wife, who though lame, and almost confined to her chair, was undoubted master, and "would beat her husband with her crutch" when he came within her reach, if he did not do as she would have him. However, when the case came on for trial, it was clearly proved that no offence even against the Conventicle Act had at the time specified in the indictment been committed by Fox and his friends, and they were liberated without the usual device of requiring them to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.

But the days of fairness and moderation were soon over. Charles was too indolent, or too much hampered by his own extravagance, to make any sustained effort on behalf of toleration. George Fox's next imprisonment was the longest, though not perhaps the most cruel of any, and lasted for nearly three years, from the beginning of 1664 to near the end of 1666. The chief actors in this persecution were no doubtful Royalists (such as Justice Porter), but two staunch Westmoreland Cavaliers, Colonel Kirkby of Kirkby Hall, and his cousin Daniel Fleming (afterwards Sir Daniel Fleming) of Rydal Hall.

In this instance we have the opportunity, so rarely granted us, of hearing both sides of the question, of

knowing what both persecutors and persecuted thought of one another. This opportunity is afforded us by the publication of an unusually rich collection of manuscripts belonging to the Fleming family.[1] Here we see Daniel Fleming of Rydal, one of a numerous band of cousins, Curwens, Lawsons, and so on, to which Colonel Kirkby also belongs. All these Cumberland and Westmoreland squires are jubilant over the King's return, but they rejoice with trembling. They are perpetually hearing of plots and rebellions; Colonel Lambert is said to have escaped from prison, and to be marching from Scotland with 30,000 men; the "fanatics," as they call all the Puritan Nonconformists, are astir; till the fanatics are suppressed there will be no peaceable enjoyment of their estates by the Westmoreland lakes for squires loyal to Church and King. And with these alarms, as we can now see, the name of the Quaker sect was honestly, but most ignorantly connected. Thus, if these rural magistrates were, as they certainly seem to have been, both cruel and unjust in their magisterial proceedings against the Friends, their conduct is to be accounted for not merely by religious bigotry and arrogant Episcopalian scorn of Puritan sectaries, but also by that fruitful parent of cruelty, fear.

Among these persecuting squires we find with regret Daniel Fleming of Rydal taking the lead. That name, Rydal, brings to our minds Wordsworthian calm and repose, and a remembrance of the soothing ministrations of Nature. Yet from Rydal Hall, in the years immediately following the Restoration, went forth

[1] Historical Manuscripts Commission: Twelfth Report. Appendix, Part vii.

many a warrant that broke up the happiness of an honest dalesman's home, sending the father or the mother of the family to endure the foulness of a pestilential prison, for no crime but that of worshipping God according to their conscience. "Oh, fye, Justice Fleming," was the remonstrance of William Wilson of Stangend, "that ever this report should be sounded in our ears, that within thy liberties such plundering should be amongst thy neighbours. We never had the like in our parish since the Scots was amongst us, nor never expected that our own justices should have made such work, as set men on robbing and spoiling true men's goods, who dare not spoil themselves, nor do any hurt to any man."[1]

George Fox also wrote to him, "Oh Justice Fleming, dost thou not hear the cry of the widows and the cry of the fatherless, who were made so through persecution? . . . One more is dead whom thou sent to prison, having left five children, both fatherless and motherless. . . . Again, Justice Fleming, consider, when John Stubbs was before thee, having a wife and four small children, and little to live on but what they honestly got by their own diligence, as soon as he appeared thou criedst out, 'Put the oath to that man.' And when he confessed that he was but a poor man thou hadst no regard, but cast away pity, not hearing what he would say. . . . Consider also thy poor neighbour William Wilson' [the writer of the previous letter], 'who was known to all the parish and neighbours to be an industrious man, and careful to maintain his wife and children, yet had little but what he had got with his hands in diligence and travels to supply himself.

[1] Fleming MSS. 580.

How should his wife maintain her children, when thou hast cast her husband into prison, and thereby made him incapable of working for them?"

To all such appeals no doubt the Justice would have answered, that these poor people should have thought about wife and children before venturing to break the Act of 1662 against Quakers' meetings. It is true that the right to "obey God rather than men" was once claimed by some Galilean fishermen, but it was outrageous that it should be asked for by the dalesmen of Westmoreland.

What adds to our regret in having to leave the lord of Rydal pilloried as a tyrant and persecutor is, that he was evidently a man of some little culture, an antiquary in his way, a friend of Sir William Dugdale's, and a buyer of his books.[1] But he had made up his mind that the "rabble of fanaticks" who met at Mrs. Fell's house must be suppressed. He looked upon the Quakers as "vermin," and when he and his brother squires were once in full cry after their prey, they showed more of the ardour of the huntsman than of the patient impartiality of the judge.

Thus then it was that towards the end of 1663 the squirearchy of Cumberland and Westmoreland began to bestir themselves for the more effectual suppression of the Quaker teachers. In this work Fleming was the most active. In his report to Sir Henry Bennet,[2] the Secretary of State, he said, "it was necessary to spurr on the majestrates of Kendal to the good work of

[1] It is amusing to find Daniel Fleming's two sisters Frances and Bridget writing to him (February 21, 1662) to thank him for making choice of them for his valentines, and to ask him for some account of "Don Qizxote and Sankca Pankca." Fleming MSS. 477.)

[2] Afterwards Lord Arlington.

the prosecution of the Quakers."[1] At Quarter Sessions at Kendal he offered a reward of £5 to any one who would apprehend George Fox; and so great was his zeal, that his cousin and fellow-persecutor Kirkby said that there was not such a man as Justice Fleming in all those parts; his whole time was taken up with the Quakers; he had holed the Fox and staid his Hambrough Quaker from travelling.[2]

Yet outwardly Colonel Kirkby still preserved some appearance of civility to the Friends. On some rumour of warrants being issued for his apprehension Fox, as his manner was, determined to march into the lion's den, and started off for a five-miles walk to Kirkby Hall. He found the Hall full of the Flemings and others of the cousinry, who had come to take leave of the Colonel (as they might now take leave of one going to India) on the eve of his departure to take his seat in Parliament. For some time Fox sat in the parlour among the uncongenial squires, but they said little to him nor he much to them. When the Colonel entered, Fox said that, having heard of Kirkby's desire to arrest him, he had come to visit him and hear what he had to say against him. Said Kirkby before all the company, "As I am a gentleman I have nothing against you. But Mistress Fell must not keep great meetings at her house, for they meet contrary to the Act." Fox argued that the Act was meant for turbulent and seditious persons, not for those who met at Margaret Fell's house, the Colonel's own neighbours, whom he well knew to be peaceable people. Kirkby repeated that he had nothing against Fox, and shook him by the

[1] Fleming MSS. 601.
[2] *Ibid.* 580. I cannot explain the last allusion.

hand at parting; he then went up to Westminster to take his place in the Cavalier Parliament.

Scarcely had Kirkby departed when a private meeting of Justices and Deputy-Lieutenants was held at Justice Preston's house, Holker Hall, to concert measures for the suppression of the Quakers. A warrant was issued, and an officer came with sword and pistols to arrest Fox. He had been on the point of leaving that part of England for a time, but fearing that the brunt of the persecution would fall upon his followers if he were absent, he did not avail himself of an opportunity to escape, but went with the officer to Holker Hall, and his faithful ally Margaret Fell accompanied him.

When they were brought into the justice-room, they found Justices Preston and Rawlinson, both members of the Fleming kinship,[1] besides many more, unknown to Fox. It was rather a strange thing that among these magistrates who were going to put the strict letter of the law in force against a Protestant Nonconformist, there was a certain Sir George Middleton, who as a Papist and a recusant was the object of laws almost as fierce and as intolerant as those that were aimed against the Quakers. The examination turned chiefly on "the plot," that is apparently the so-called insurrection of Farnley Wood in Yorkshire, which broke out, or rather which made a feeble puff of smoke, in the autumn of 1663, and which was so futile and so obviously doomed to failure that many persons believed it to have been no genuine plot at all, but a "trepan," as it was called, prepared by the *agents provocateurs* of the Duke of Buckingham. However, against this plot, whatever was its reality, Fox had put forth one of his

[1] See Fleming MSS. 3143, 3144, and p. 380.

"papers," urging his followers to have nothing to do with any such revolutionary proceedings, but the magistrates were not ashamed to use the monstrous argument that he must have had a guilty knowledge of the plot, otherwise he could not have written against it.

The evidence, however, was beginning to prove insufficient, and then the ready expedient of tendering the oath was resorted to. Middleton, who had already had an altercation with Fox, in which he had got the worst of it, cried out, "Bring the book, and put the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to him." The oaths were those which he himself, as a Papist, had refused to take and which were meant for him, and not for the Puritan sectaries. It certainly must have required a good deal of modest assurance on the part of a magistrate, himself a recusant, to press that argument against his enemy. Fox was ready with the inevitable *tu quoque;* some of Middleton's brother magistrates seem to have felt the iniquity of the proceeding, and eventually, instead of making out the *mittimus* and sending him at once to Lancaster Gaol, they ordered Fox to appear at the next Quarter Sessions at Lancaster, and meanwhile he was allowed to return quietly with Margaret Fell to Swarthmoor.

During the short respite thus obtained, of course the meetings at Swarthmoor went on as of old. One day (probably a Sunday) Colonel Kirkby, having returned from Westminster, appeared with the constables at his heels. He walked in to where the Friends were sitting in silence, and "How now, Mr. Fox!" he cried; "you have a fine company here." "Yes," said Fox, "we meet to wait upon the Lord." Kirkby then began to

take down the names of Friends, and if any did not readily tell him their names, he committed them into the constables' hands, and declared that they should go to prison. The constables were unwilling to take them without a warrant, upon which the fuming magistrate "threatened to set the constables also by the heels, but the men knew the law better than their master, and one of them told him, he could keep them so long as they were in his presence, but after he was gone he could not keep them without a warrant."

Now began a tedious and evidently much bungled judicial campaign against Fox, in which the faithful Margaret was also included. The Quarter Sessions at Lancaster, January 11, 1664, the Assizes at the same city in March and August of the same year, and in March 1665, were successive stages of the affair. During all this time Fox was kept in durance at Lancaster Castle, for Fleming, Rawlinson, and the other Justices at the Quarter Sessions, had committed him to prison for not taking the prescribed oaths, thus purposely laying the foundation for the much more serious procedure which was to be put in operation before the Judges of Assize.

This procedure was none other than the invocation of the terrible penalty of *Praemunire* on George Fox, and on Margaret Fell likewise. This penalty, at first attached by Plantagenet kings to ecclesiastics who were trying to override the royal prerogative by appeals to Rome, caused the offender "to be out of the king's protection, to be attached in his body, to lose his lands, tenements, and chattels." After the Reformation this old penalty was sharpened up and applied with remorseless severity to all adherents of the old religion who

should receive or publish bulls from Rome, bring in or receive to wear an *Agnus Dei*, or send relief to a Jesuit beyond sea. By a statute passed in the third year of James I., in the first spasm of terror caused by the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, it was enacted that if any person above eighteen, being not noble, should refuse the oath of allegiance[1] when tendered by a bishop or by the Justices of the Peace at their Quarter Sessions, such person should be liable to the penalties of a *Praemunire*,[2] and these penalties as explained and expanded by the black-letter lawyers amounted to confiscation of all property real and personal, to loss of the king's protection, and to perpetual imprisonment during the king's pleasure.

Now, with malicious ingenuity, the lawyers and magistrates of the Restoration discovered that this dreaded penalty of *Praemunire*, invented and perfected solely as a weapon of defence against the wide-reaching arm of Rome, might be used to rid themselves of a much humbler enemy, the troublesome and disrespectful Quaker. It was true that he was utterly at variance with the men against whom all that array of statutes had been aimed; true that if he might only have substituted a solemn promise for an oath, he would have promised, and have kept as true allegiance to the restored King as the most devout preacher of Divine Right could desire. Still the Act said—"If any person not noble, and above eighteen, shall refuse the oath of allegiance." The Quakers would refuse that and every other oath. Therefore they could be deprived of every penny of their property, and shut up in prison for the

[1] The oath of supremacy is not mentioned in this statute.
[2] See Gardiner, *History of England*, i. 288 (Ed. 1883).

rest of their natural lives, if the King would only consent so to prolong their captivity. And all this was done in the name of religion. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?"

The judges who came on the Northern Circuit at the three before-mentioned Assizes, were Twisden and Turner, and by one or other of these Fox was successively tried. We have already seen something of Judge Twisden's little infirmities of temper, and there was an amusing illustration of these in the trial at the March Assizes of 1664. When the judge pressed him to swear, Fox pleaded the King's Declaration from Breda, in which he said that no man should be called in question for matters of religion so long as he lived peaceably. "If thou ownest the King," said Fox, "why dost thou call me into question, and put me upon taking an oath, which is a matter of religion, seeing neither thou nor any one else can charge me with unpeaceable living?" "Upon this he was moved, and looking angrily at me said, 'Sirrah! will you swear?' I told him I was none of his sirrahs; I was a Christian; and for him, an old man and a judge, to sit there and give nicknames to his prisoners, it did not become either his grey hairs or his office. 'Well,' said he, 'I am a Christian too.' 'Then do Christian works,' said I. 'Sirrah!' said he, 'thou thinkest to frighten me with thy words.' Then catching himself and looking aside, he said, 'Hark, I am using the word [sirrah] again,' and so checked himself. I said, 'I spoke to thee in love; for that language did not become thee, a judge. Thou oughtest to instruct a prisoner in the law, if he were ignorant and out of the way.' 'And I speak in

love to thee too,' he said. 'But,' said I, 'love gives no nicknames.' Then he roused himself and said, 'I will not be afraid of thee, George Fox; thou speakest so loud, thy voice drowns mine and the court's; I must call for three or four criers to drown thy voice; thou hast good lungs.' 'I am a prisoner here,' said I, 'for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake; for His sake do I suffer, for Him do I stand this day; and if my voice were five times louder, I should lift it up and sound it for Christ's sake, for whose cause I stand this day before your judgement-seat in obedience to Christ, who commands not to swear; before whose judgement-seat you must all be brought, and must give an account.'" The judge, in answer to Fox's repeated attempts to draw him into a discussion as to the meaning of Christ's command not to swear, answered that he was a servant of the King, sent there not to dispute with any one, but to put the laws in execution, insisted on tendering the oath of allegiance to Fox, and on his refusal to take it ordered him off to prison, to be kept till the next Assizes. Margaret Fell's case was dealt with in a similar manner.

In the interval between this and his next appearance in court, Fox employed part of the long leisure of the prison in writing a paper to all judges and other magistrates who professed themselves to be Christians, arguing against the custom then far too prevalent, of addressing abusive language from the bench to the prisoners in the dock. According to his usual practice, he draws all his arguments from the Bible. Joshua said to the offending Achan, not "Sirrah! you rascal, knave, and rogue!" but, "My son: give glory to the God of Israel." "Even Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego by their names, not adding any opprobrious epithets; and shamefully as Paul and Silas were entreated at Philippi, at least they were called 'men,' and not 'sirrahs, rogues, and knaves' by the magistrates."

The clerk of the magistrates at Lancaster must have done his work with disgraceful carelessness, for Fox was able at the August Assizes to point out several blunders as to dates and the like, both in his and in Margaret Fell's indictments, but apparently these admitted errors only procured the delay of his sentence till the next Assizes, which were held on March 16, 1665. The indictment, according to Fox's account, was still but a bungled business, but the judge carried matters through with a high hand; the undoubted fact that the prisoners had refused the oath of allegiance was proved to the satisfaction of the jury, and both George Fox and Margaret Fell received the sentence of *Praemunire* with all its terrible consequences, outlawry, confiscation, perpetual imprisonment. According to Fox's statement, he was not even present when sentence was passed upon him, much less asked in the usual form what he had to urge in mitigation of the penalty, the object being to stop his mouth and prevent him from pointing out any more flaws in the indictment.

For the fourteen months which had already elapsed since Fox's committal to prison, he had been confined in Lancaster Castle. At first his imprisonment was not a very close one, but after the Assizes of August 1664, in which he exposed the blunders of the magistrates who were persecuting him, Colonel Kirkby, he says, "gave orders to the gaoler to keep me close, and

suffer no flesh alive to come at me, for I was not fit to be discoursed with by men. Then I was put into a tower, where the smoke of the other prisoners came up so thick that I could hardly see the candle when it burned; and I being locked under three locks, the under-gaoler, when the smoke was great, would hardly be persuaded to come up to unlock one of the uppermost doors, for fear of the smoke, so that I was almost smothered. Besides, it rained in upon my bed, and many times when I went to stop out the rain in the cold winter season, my shirt was wet through with the rain that came in upon me while I was labouring to stop it out. And the place being high, and open to the wind, sometimes as fast as I stopped it, the wind blew it out again. In this manner did I lie all that long, cold winter till the next assize; in which time I was so starved with cold and rain, that my body was greatly swelled, and my limbs much benumbed."

In April 1665, Colonel Kirkby and his confederate Justices decided that Fox's continued detention at Lancaster was doing them harm, and worked hard to get him removed to some distant place, so that he might be forgotten, and sympathy with him might die out in Lancashire. They talked about getting him sent "beyond sea," but eventually, six weeks after the sentence of *Praemunire* had been passed, they obtained an order from the King and Council for his removal from Lancaster to Scarbro'. He was so weak with lying for so many months in that cold, wet, and smoky prison, that he could hardly stand. However, the sheriff's officers dragged him out of prison, not telling him whither they were taking him. "They hurried me away," he says, "about fourteen miles to Bentham,

though I was so very weak I was hardly able to sit on horseback; and my clothes smelt so of smoke that they were loathesome to myself. The wicked gaoler, one Hunter, a young fellow, would come behind and give the horse a lash with his whip, and make him skip and leap, so that I being weak had difficulty to sit him; and then he would come and look me in the face and say, 'How do you, Mr. Fox?' I told him it was not civil in him to do so. The Lord cut him off soon after."

At York the treatment of the prisoner was somewhat improved. Lord Frescheville (a loyal Cavalier who had just received his patent of peerage from Charles II.) commanded the cavalry stationed there, "and was very civil and loving." "I gave him," says Fox, "an account of my imprisonment, and declared many things to him relating to truth. They kept me at York two days, and then the marshal and four or five soldiers were sent to convey me to Scarbro' Castle. Indeed these were very civil men, and carried themselves civilly and lovingly to me. When we were come to Scarbro' they had me to an inn, and gave notice to the governor, who sent six soldiers to be my guard that night." Such extraordinary precautions seem to show that, absurd as the suggestion sounds, the authorities really looked upon Fox as a somewhat dangerous conspirator, and believed in the possibility of an attempt at rescue. Weak as he was at this time, and subject to fainting fits, he was put into a room in the Castle which was open to the rain, and the chimney of which was always smoking. The governor, Sir J. Crossland, came one day to see his prisoner, and as Fox knew him to be a Roman Catholic, he told him that it was his Purgatory

to which he had been consigned. The prisoner spent fifty shillings out of his own pocket in order to make the room somewhat tolerable, and then they removed him to another worse room without a fire-place, and much exposed to the weather. "Being," as he says, "to the seaside, and lying much open, the wind drove in the rain forcibly so that the water came over my bed and ran about the room, that I was fain to skim it up with a platter. And when my clothes were wet I had no fire to dry, so that my body was benumbed with cold, and my fingers swelled, that one was grown as big as two." Besides all these hardships he seems to have been left for some time without food, and had to pay a woman to bring him some necessaries out of the town, who when she came back was forced to run the gauntlet of the soldiers trying to snatch the food out of her hand. At last he had to hire a soldier to bring him his provisions, which were truly anchorite's fare. A three-penny loaf would last him for three weeks or even longer, and his drink was for the most part water with wormwood steeped in it. Once in the bitter winter weather, having taken a violent cold, he sent out for a little "elecampane beer."[1] The soldiers heard of it, and by way of a practical joke, feigned a message for Fox to go and wait upon the deputy-governor, and in his absence drank up his cordial. "When I came back," he says, "one of the soldiers came to me in a jeer, and asked me for some strong beer. I told him they had played their pretty trick; and so I took no further notice of it." Assuredly, when we compare the prison discipline of the Stuart period

[1] "Elecampane," says the *Imperial Dictionary*, "is an aromatic bitter, and was formerly regarded as an expectorant."

with the prison discipline of the Victorian age we shall not be tempted to say, "The former days were better than these." It was felt as a great grievance by Fox that the governor would not allow the Friends of Scarbro' to visit him; and with his usual habit of quoting a Biblical precedent for everything, he reminded the authorities of what was done in the case of St. Paul at Rome, how the heathen rulers of that day allowed him, though in prison, to see his friends, and to preach Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him. "So you that go under the name of Christians are worse in this respect than those heathen were."

Though the Friends were not permitted to visit their apostle, all other sorts and conditions of men were allowed to come and gaze at one whom the governor seems to have looked upon as an interesting specimen added to his collection. Lord Falconbridge (or Fauconberg), the Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding, and in high favour with Charles II., notwithstanding his marriage with Cromwell's daughter; old Lord Fairfax's widow, and other members of the Yorkshire aristocracy, came thus at various times to gaze or to dispute. There came a Presbyterian physician, who argued against the universality of the Light of Christ; and there came also Papists—once in great numbers—to argue about the infallibility of the Pope,[1] and Christ's descent into Hades. But the most interesting of these interviews, as it seems to me, and one to which sufficient attention has not yet been called, was one which he had with a certain Doctor of Divinity named Cradock, who called

[1] In this discussion Fox quoted the case of Pope Marcellinus, who is alleged to have fallen away under the stress of Diocletian's persecution.

upon him together with three other clergymen, the governor and his wife, and some other distinguished visitors. After the cause of Fox's imprisonment had been stated, and the usual arguments about swearing had been exchanged, "'Why,' said Fox, 'dost thou excommunicate my friends?' (for he had excommunicated abundance both in Yorkshire and Lancashire). He said, 'For not coming to church.' 'Why,' said I, 'ye left us above twenty years ago, when we were but young lads and lassies, to the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, many of whom made spoil of our goods, and persecuted us, because we would not follow them. Nor we, being but young, knew little then of your principles; and if ye had intended to keep the old men that did know them, to you and your principles alive, that we might have known them, ye should either not have fled from us as ye did, or ye should have sent us your epistles, collects, homilies, and evening songs, for Paul wrote epistles to the saints, though he was in prison. But they and we might have turned Turks or Jews for any collects, homilies, or epistles we had from you all this while. And now thou hast excommunicated us, both young and old, and so have others of you done; that is, ye have put us out of your church before you have got us into it, and before ye have brought us to know your principles.'"

In these words Fox concisely sums up the whole early history of Quakerism, fighting as it did with Calvinism, with Puritanism, with much that the Anglican spirit was also opposed to, but getting no help, no guidance or counselling words, from the dismayed and silenced Anglican clergy. St. Dominic and men of that mould might be said to have earned the hateful

right to persecute others by the courage with which they bore persecution when their enemies had the upper hand. Even so with the Roman Catholics under Elizabeth, and with the Scottish Covenanters under Charles II., but not so with the timid Church which lay so low during the years of Puritan ascendency from 1640 to 1660.

The liberty thus given to the prisoner to converse with those who differed from his religious views, and who probably expected easily to vanquish him in argument, did not extend to his brethren in the faith, as to whom he says he was "as a man buried alive." Rumours of an unpleasant kind as to the probable termination of his case filtered through into his prison cell. The officers of the garrison often threatened "that he should be hanged over the wall," and the deputy-governor once informed him that he was being kept there as a kind of hostage—"the King knowing I had a great interest in the people, had sent me thither, that if there should be any stirring in the nation, they should hang me over the wall to keep the nation down." All which shows the utter ignorance of the Government as to the true character of the Quaker movement. Whatever the faults of the early Friends might be, insurrection and armed resistance to the Government were things that for them never came within the region of the possible, and no rebellion against the Stuart King would have been either retarded or promoted for a day by either the imprisonment of their founder or by "hanging him over the wall." There was a wedding at the house of a neighbouring Papist, and during the merry-making that followed, there was much pleasant discourse of the speedy execution of the prisoner in

the Castle. Either the wedding guests, in the lightness of their heart, came to taunt Fox with what they had heard, or in some other way the news was conveyed to him. Brave at heart for all his worn-out body, he replied—"If this be what ye desire, and if it be permitted you by the Lord, I am ready. I have never feared death or sufferings in my life, but have been well known for an innocent and peaceable man, free from all stirrings and plottings, and seeking the good of all men."

After a time Governor Crossland, having got into trouble himself over a mismanaged privateer of his that had made some illegal captures, was softened in spirit, and showed a kindlier bearing towards his patient prisoner. The ever faithful "Esquire Marsh," who said "he would go a hundred miles barefoot for George Fox's freedom," exerted his influence at Court on his behalf, and presented a petition, drawn up by some London Friends, setting forth the sufferings already endured by their founder. In the end, Charles II. was persuaded of the peaceable character of the prisoner at Scarbro', or rather probably was persuaded to take the trouble to give five minutes' attention to his case. An order was signed stating that the King was certainly informed that George Fox was a man principled against plotting and fighting, and ready at all times to discover plots rather than to make them, and signifying thereupon the royal pleasure that he should be released from his imprisonment. The order was brought down to Scarbro' by a zealous Quaker minister, named John Whitehead, who had been one of the most active in procuring it, and on September 1, 1666, Fox obtained his discharge. He had been deprived of liberty since January 11, 1664, three years all but three months.

After his release he wished to make Governor Crossland a present for the civility and kindness he had lately showed him, but the governor refused to receive it, saying that he would gladly do anything that he could for him and his friends. Ever after, when the mayor of Scarbro' sent up to him for soldiers to break up the meetings of Friends, if he appeared to comply, he privately gave his soldiers a charge not to meddle, and this friendly attitude he retained till his dying day.[1] Much also was the bearing of the officers and soldiers of the garrison changed from what it had been at first. When George Fox's name was mentioned in their presence, they would often say, "He is as stiff as a tree, and as pure as a bell, for we could never move him."

[1] When Fox visited Scarbro' three years after his liberation, Sir Jordan Crossland sent him a message, "Surely you will not be so unkind as not to come and see me and my wife." Fox accordingly, after his meeting with Friends, went up to the Castle and had a courteous and even loving reception from his former gaoler.

CHAPTER XIII

MARRIAGE

While Fox had been shut up in prison great and terrible events had been branding themselves on the page of English history. In 1665 had begun the disastrous war with Holland, but far more calamitous was the Great Plague of London, which began in the early part of 1665, and which was at its height from April to October of that year, or during the first six months of Fox's imprisonment at Scarbro'.

And now, on September 2, 1665, the very day after his release, broke out the memorable Fire of London, which lasted for five days, and destroyed thirteen thousand houses. On the last day of the fire, "Justice" Fleming's brother Alexander, who was living in London, wrote as follows from the Red Lion in Grub Street, to his brother at Rydal—"The fire is almost quenched. The houses are laid so flat to the ground, that the City looks just like our [Westmoreland] fells, for there is nothing to see but heaps of stones. You may stand where Cheapside was and see the Thames."[1]

Of this calamity Fox deemed that he had received a Divine warning when he was a prisoner at Lancaster. "As I was walking in my chamber," he says, "with my

[1] Fleming MSS. 41-2.

eye to the Lord, I saw the angel of the Lord, with a glittering drawn sword stretched southward, as though the court had been all on fire. Not long after, the wars broke out with Holland, the sickness broke forth, and afterwards the fire of London: so the Lord's sword was drawn indeed." Soon after his release, Fox visited London, and walked for awhile among the ruins, "taking good notice of them, and beheld the city lying according as the word of the Lord had come to me concerning it several years before."

For Fox personally those three years of prison hardship had evidently been one of the turning-points in his life. He was but forty-two years old when he obtained his release, but we can see that he came forth an old and broken man, having left his youth behind him in the gloomy fortresses to which he had been confined. "I was weak," he says, "with lying almost three years in cruel and hard imprisonments; my joints and my body were so stiff and benumbed that I could hardly get on my horse or bend my joints; nor could I well bear to be near the fire or to eat warm meat, I had been kept so long from it." He still travelled frequently about the country; nay, as we shall see, America and Germany were to be the scenes of some of his future labours; but the manly frame was bowed, the once expert and active horseman was for some time only able with great difficulty to mount on horseback, and there were evidently some long spaces in his life when he was altogether laid by through sickness.

But the years of imprisonment had not been all wasted. He had evidently, in the dungeon vaults of Lancaster and Scarbro', been meditating deeply on the necessities and the dangers of the new Society which

he had founded. He saw that some tighter bond of discipline than had yet prevailed must be introduced, or the Quaker churches scattered over the land would slide downward into "the anarchy of the Ranters." There was a necessity also, in view of the many hot-headed and excitable persons who had joined the Society, of some organ which could say with distinct and authoritative voice, "These are, and these are *not* acts and words of which we as a Society are willing to bear the responsibility." For this purpose, led as he believed by the Divine Spirit of wisdom and truth, he framed that scheme of church government which has lasted for two hundred and thirty years in the Society of Friends. This consists of Yearly, Quarterly, and Monthly Meetings, with some smaller organizations which need not be noticed here. The Yearly Meeting, to which allusion has already been made, is the parliament or convocation of the whole kingdom; the Quarterly Meeting is virtually the synod of the county; the Monthly Meeting is the vestry of the parish or of a cluster of neighbouring parishes. The respective rights and duties of these various bodies were carefully defined; and the system as a whole, blending as it did congregational liberty with national unity, showed a practical sagacity which has been attested by its successful working for more than two centuries. Probably Fox may have been assisted in the working out of his scheme by some of the educated and thoughtful men who had by this time joined the new Society, but the main idea seems to have been clearly his own; and the really statesmanlike qualities which he showed, both in its original conception and in securing its establishment among all the widely-scattered com-

munities of the Quakers, are the best refutation of the absurd statement of a recent historian, that "there was no reason for placing him morally or intellectually above Ludovick Muggleton or Joanna Southcote."

For the next few years after his release from prison, Fox was chiefly employed in journeying through England, Wales, and Ireland, confirming his followers in their faith, and everywhere persuading them to adopt the new organization. His life from this point onward became more and more identified with the history of Quakerism; and from various causes (partly that premature advent of old age to which I have alluded) it yields less of individual interest to the biographer than its earlier chapters. But we notice with interest some of the indications afforded by this part of the *Journal*, of the increasing number of thoughtful and influential men who, notwithstanding the bitter persecution to which it was subjected, came out boldly and joined the new Society. Isaac Pennington and Thomas Ellwood had been for some years Quakers;[1] Robert Barclay, a lad of nineteen, in 1667 was girding himself up to write his great "Apology"; and William Penn, the courtier and the friend of the Duke of York, in 1668 finally cast in his lot with the despised and harassed Quakers. But besides these well-known instances, we meet in the pages of the *Journal* with an "ex-sheriff of Lincoln," "Walter Jenkins, who had been a Justice of the Peace in Monmouthshire," and a Friend who had been sheriff of Nottingham about the year 1649, and had had George Fox for his prisoner. All these, besides several other

[1] Their conversion to Quakerism was in the years 1658 and 1660 respectively.

magistrates, and some clergymen, had joined the new Society.

In this connection, and as an evidence that Fox, notwithstanding his own very imperfect education, did not despise culture, we note that in 1667, when he was hard at work establishing Monthly Meetings, he also laboured at "the setting up of a school at Waltham for teaching boys," and a girls' school at Shacklewell, "for instructing them in whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation."

In one of his many visits to London, Fox called on his old friend and protector the courtier whom he calls "Esquire Marsh." He happened to be at dinner with several aristocratic guests, and asked Fox to join the party. The shy Quaker declined, but joined in the conversation though not in the repast. There was "a great Papist" there, with whom he had an argument about Baptism, Purgatory, and persecution for religion. "What is it that brings salvation in your Church?" said Fox. "Good works," said the great Papist. "Not so," answered the Quaker; "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. So it is not the good works, nor the good life that brings salvation, but the grace." "What!" said the Papist, "doth this grace that brings salvation appear unto all men?" "'Yes,' said I. 'Then,' said he, 'I deny that.' I replied, 'All that deny that are sect-makers, and are not in the universal faith, grace, and truth which the apostles were in.'" A good deal more discussion followed, in which happily neither of the parties seems to have lost his temper. At the end, "Oh!" said Esquire Marsh to the Papist, "you do not

know this man; if he would but come to church now and then he would be a brave man."

After a time Fox went aside into another room to speak with "Esquire Marsh," who as a Middlesex magistrate in high repute, had often to deal with Quaker recusants. "How," said Marsh, "am I to distinguish between you and the Independents, Baptists, and Fifth Monarchy men, who also say they cannot swear, and refuse the oath of allegiance?" "Very easily," said Fox. "All the members of those sects will swear readily enough if their cows or horses have been stolen, whereas our people will not swear even to get their private wrongs righted. In fact, it has happened that a Quaker, from whom two beasts had been stolen, appeared in court, refused to swear in his own matter, had the oaths of allegiance and supremacy tendered to him, and was 'praemunired' and cast into prison, while the thief went free." "The judge who so decided," said Marsh, "was a wicked man." In many cases, after this conversation, "Justice Marsh" was able to interpose to prevent Friends from being "praemunired," and when he could not avoid sending them to prison, he sent them for a few hours, or for one night. "At length," says Fox, "he went to the King and told him he had sent some of us to prison contrary to his conscience, and he could do so no more. Wherefore he removed his family from Limehouse, where he lived, and took lodgings near St. James's Park. He told the King that if he would be pleased to give liberty of conscience, that would quiet and settle all, for then none would have any pretence to be uneasy. And indeed he was a very serviceable man to Truth and Friends in his day."

On October 18, 1669, three years after Fox's liberation from Scarbro' Castle, came an event to which those who knew him had been for some time looking forward—his marriage to Margaret, widow of Thomas Fell. As we have seen, the good old Judge had died in November 1658, a few[2] months after the great Protector. "Happy in the opportunity of his death," he had not lived to see the ruin brought upon the cause of Puritanism and the Parliament which he loved, nor the indignities offered to the remains of his old friend and patron Bradshaw, whose death followed his own after nearly a year's interval (October 31, 1659).

We have also seen how bravely the widowed mistress of Swarthmoor Hall had held on her way, opening her house for the reception of travelling Friends, placing its large hall at their disposal for their weekly meetings, (despising the Act by which their thus assembling themselves together was forbidden under heavy penalties,) frowned upon and conspired against by the bigoted Cavalier squires of Rydal and Kirkby, and at last, together with George Fox, deprived of property and liberty by the infamous sentence of *Praemunire*. This sentence was passed in March 1665, when she had already been fourteen months in prison, owing to the blunders in the indictment, and the necessity of adjourning the trial through three assizes. Strangely enough, though the head and front of Margaret Fell's offending was the support which she had given to George Fox, she was not liberated from Lancaster in September 1666, when he walked forth from Scarbro' Castle. In the year 1667, we read in the *Journal*—"To this meeting in Lancashire Margaret Fell, being a prisoner, got liberty to come, and went with me to Jane Milner's in Cheshire,

where we parted." Apparently she returned to prison soon afterwards, for in a letter written to her in May 1668 by Thomas Salthouse (formerly steward at Swarthmoor), the writer says, "Doctor Lower hath improved his interest of late with some lords of the Royal Society to plead with the King on thy behalf for liberty, but Pharaoh's heart is so hard."[1]

However, soon after this (June 1668) she was released, on what terms we know not, but it is clear from subsequent events that the *Praemunire* still hung over her, and that she was liable to be re-committed to prison at any time. This first spell of imprisonment had lasted four and a half years (January 1664—June 1668).

Having obtained her liberty, the noble-hearted woman, after a short visit to her home (still hers, for the King seems to have interfered to prevent the sentence of confiscation from being carried into effect), spent her first year of freedom in visiting the prisons throughout England, and doing all that lay in her power to alleviate the sufferings of the Friends confined therein. In this interval she also visited her youngest daughter Rachel, who was a pupil at that school at Shacklewell which we have seen established by George Fox. After her circuit of the prisons was ended, she paid a visit to her third daughter Isabel, who five years previously had married William Yeamans of Bristol. This son-in-law of Margaret Fell's was son of that ex-sheriff of Bristol who, as we have already said, was hung before his own door in 1643, for endeavouring to betray the city to Prince Rupert. The remembrance of this display of premature Royalism was probably

[1] Quoted by Mrs. Webb, *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, p. 245.

some protection to William Yeamans and all his circle of friends at Bristol.

It was during this visit (October 27, 1669) that the long friendship of George Fox and Margaret Fell ripened into matrimony. The bride was nine years older than the bridegroom, she being in the fifty-fifth year of her age, and he in the forty-sixth of his; but though she, as well as he, had now had sad experience of a seventeenth-century prison, one may conjecture from such slight indications as are afforded us, that in mind, manner, and appearance she was the younger of the two.

But such an important event in Fox's life as his marriage must be told in his own words, though the extract is a rather long one.

"After this meeting in Gloucestershire was over, we travelled till we came to Bristol; where I met with Margaret Fell, who was come to visit her daughter Yeamans.[1] I had seen from the Lord a considerable time before, that I should take Margaret Fell to be my wife. And when I first mentioned it to her, she felt the answer of life from God thereunto. But though the Lord had opened this thing to me, yet I had not received a command from the Lord for the accomplishing of it then. Wherefore I let the thing rest, and went on in the work and service of the Lord as before, according as He led me, travelling up and down in this nation and through Ireland. But now, being at Bristol, and finding Margaret Fell there, it opened in me from the Lord that the thing should be accomplished. After we had discoursed the matter together, I told her, 'if she also was satisfied with the accom-

[1] Yeomans in the *Journal*.

plishing of it now, she should first send for her children,' which she did. When the rest of her daughters were come, I asked both them and her sons-in-law 'if they had anything against it or for it,' and they all severally expressed their satisfaction therein. Then I asked Margaret 'if she had fulfilled and performed her husband's will to her children.' She replied, 'The children knew that.' Whereupon I asked them 'whether, if their mother married, they should not lose by it.' And I asked Margaret 'whether she had done anything in lieu of it, which might answer it to the children.' The children said 'she had answered it to them, and desired me to speak no more of it.' I told them I was plain, and would have all things done plainly, for I sought not any outward advantage to myself. So after I had thus acquainted the children with it, our intention of marriage was laid before Friends, both privately and publicly, to their full satisfaction, many of whom gave testimony thereunto that it was of God. Afterwards, a meeting being appointed for the accomplishing thereof in the meeting-house of Broad Mead in Bristol, we took each other, the Lord joining us together in the honourable marriage state in the Everlasting Covenant, and immortal Seed of Life. In the sense whereof, living and weighty testimonies were borne thereunto by Friends, in the movings of the heavenly power which united us together. There was a certificate relating both to the proceedings and the marriage openly read and signed by the relations, and by most of the ancient Friends of that city, besides many others from divers parts of this nation."

Though expressed in somewhat archaic language, the preceding extract describes the manner in which

marriages have been solemnized by members of the Society of Friends for nearly two centuries and a half. Rejecting all sacraments, they have of course not called marriage a sacrament, but they have always insisted strongly on the religious character of the covenant plighted (as the old phrase ran) "in the fear of the Lord and in the presence of this assembly." But they have contended with equal zeal that the presence of no priest or minister is necessary to hallow the union, which, like all the other acts of Quaker worship, is believed to be hallowed by the unseen but spirit-felt presence of Christ.

One point for which Fox had especially laboured in settling the discipline of the new Society had been "that widows should make provision for their first husband's children before they married again," in order "that all things might be kept pure and clean, and be done in righteousness to the glory of God." It was in accordance therefore with his own principle that he made such anxious inquiry of Margaret Fell's daughters and sons-in-law whether they were satisfied that their pecuniary interests were not neglected in their mother's second marriage. In point of fact it seems that Judge Fell had provided for this contingency, devising the Swarthmoor property, in the event of his widow's re-marriage, to his seven daughters, whom he constituted his residuary legatees.

Thus there was probably no real conflict of interests between George Fox and his wife's daughters. But beyond that, there seems to have been unclouded love and confidence between him and all the female part of the family. All the six surviving daughters and their husbands published after his death a

"Testimony" on his behalf, beginning, "Neither days nor length of time with us can wear out the memory of our dear and honoured father, George Fox, whom the Lord hath taken to Himself." Even more convincing, perhaps, are the endorsements put by their remoter descendants on the letters which they cherished with pious care. "My dear and honoured grandmother's affectionate letter to my dear and honoured grandfather Fox," is one of such endorsements, and there are many others similarly expressed.

Unhappily, the only son of the late Judge, George Fell, did not look so favourably on his mother's second marriage. He had kept his terms in London as a barrister and was now a Lancashire squire, thirty-three years of age, a magistrate and a commissioner of militia, somewhat incapable, somewhat extravagant, and married apparently to an extravagant wife. To him his mother's re-marriage brought no accession of income, and one can easily understand that the social disparagement of such a kinship with the homely shepherd of Leicestershire would be keenly felt by the young magistrate when he met Kirkby, Fleming, and others of the magisterial cousinry at Quarter Sessions or Militia dinners. He brought vexatious and apparently unfounded claims against his mother for some of her dealings with the Swarthmoor estate; and there is too much reason to believe that he approved, if he did not actually originate the action of the Justices in renewing Margaret Fell's suspended sentence of imprisonment. In a letter written by George Fox to his wife on March 23, 1669, he says—

"Dear Heart, to whom is my love. Thou mayest have some trials, but keep in wisdom and patience,

There hath been a great noise about thy son, George Fell, as having orders to send thee to Westchester and me to Jersey, which I have been desirous should get as little as may be out among Friends for Truth's sake. I am informed he hath been with Kirkby, Monk, and such-like persons; and I understand his intent is to have Swarthmoor, and that he saith thou lost thy right [thereto] by building before being married, [and also that thou] cannot have thy third of Marsh Grange and the Mills, they being customary estate; and that it cost him £40 to get a warrant to save that estate, which he might have taken. The agreement thou made with him, he says, signifies nothing, thou being a prisoner. . . Now if thou should make another agreement in another name [Fox instead of Fell] it may beget another trouble worse than the former. But of this thou canst inform thyself also, and let all things be done in peace and quietness, and in the power that binds. Do not look at, but keep over all unnaturalness from him, if any such thing should appear; keep in that which was and is, and will be. If he hath defamed thee at Court, thou should come up some time and clear it, that such things may be emptied out of their minds; and then come over all his orders, (?) if he have any orders, but I think he hath none. But however it be, keep over them all in the power of God that doth bind, for that must work through all things.

"No word but my love to thee, Susan, Rachel, and the little ones, and Leonard and Mary Fell, and all be quiet and keep to the testimony.

"G. F."[1]

[1] *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, p. 256.

The intrigues for Margaret Fox's imprisonment were but too successful. It was not a difficult matter for any one who had a spite against the Quaker non-juror to get him or her lodged in prison. George Fox, who had parted from his wife a week after the marriage, "betaking ourselves," as he says, "to our several services," wrote to her early in 1670, appointing a meeting with her in Leicestershire; but instead of meeting with her, he heard she was haled out of her house to Lancaster prison again, by an order obtained from the King and Council to fetch her back to prison upon the old *Praemunire*, though she had been discharged from that imprisonment by their order the year before. The old persecutor, Colonel Kirkby, was the informer, and some at least of the Fell family believed that George Fell had been privy to the scheme.

The second imprisonment of Margaret Fox lasted about a year (March 1670—April 1671). Two of her daughters went at once to petition the King on her behalf, and actually obtained his order for her release, but when they took it down into Lancashire, Colonel Kirkby and his brother magistrates, by some device which is not very clearly explained, contrived to treat it as of no validity. The matter had to sleep for a time, for 1670 was a bad year for Nonconformists. Archbishop Sheldon was in his most persecuting humour, and the Conventicle Act had just been renewed with heavier penalties than ever on offenders against it. In fact, this seems to have furnished the magistrates with a plea for disregarding the King's order.

However, at last, in April 1671, the desired deliverance came. As Fox says, "Now the persecution a

little ceasing, I was moved to speak to Martha Fisher and another Friend to go to the King about my wife's liberty. They went in faith and in the Lord's power, who gave them favour with the King, so that he granted a discharge under the broad seal, to clear both her and her estate, after she had been ten years[1] a prisoner and praemunired; the like whereof was scarcely to be heard of in England."

According to a letter from Margaret Fox to her son-in-law Rous, we learn that "the two women Friends took the grant out of the Attorney-General's office, and he gave them his fee, which should have been five pounds, and his clerk took but twenty shillings, whereas his fee was forty. Yesterday they went with it to the King, who signed it in the Council, and Arlington also signed it, but would take no fees, whereas his fees would have been £12 or £20. Neither would Williamson's man take anything, saying that if any religion be true it is ours. To-morrow it is to pass the signet, and on Sixth-day [Friday] the privy seal, and afterwards the broad seal, which may be done on any day. The power of the Lord hath bound their hearts wonderfully. Blessed be His name for ever."[2] So ended the last imprisonment of the late mistress of Swarthmoor.

[1] *Sic:* it should have been seven, or more strictly five and a half.

[2] *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, p. 272.

NOTE

MARGARET FELL'S DESCENDANTS

As it is only through these step-children of his that George Fox is in any way linked with succeeding generations,[1] it may be worth while to give a brief account of them here. Moreover, some of the sons-in-law were men who themselves played an important part in the early history of Quakerism.

George Fell, the undutiful son, died not many years after his mother's second marriage. His son sold most of the family property to a representative of the female line. His grandson married William Penn's granddaughter, but no other connection with Quakerism was kept up by this, the direct line of the Fells of Swarthmoor Hall, and it seems to have died out near the close of last century.

Margaret, the oldest of the seven daughters, married a Quaker named John Rous, a West Indian merchant in good circumstances, who resided in London, and whose influence, as he was a man of some importance in the City, was often successfully exercised on behalf of his imprisoned friends and relatives. When George Fox undertook the long journey to the West Indies and the American continent, which will be described in the next chapter, his son-in-law John Rous was his zealous and most helpful companion.

Isabel, the third daughter, married, as has been said,

[1] The various families of Fox, who now form one of the most numerous and influential Quaker clans, are descended from Francis Fox of St. Germans in Cornwall, and have not the remotest connection with the founder of Quakerism.

William Yeamans of Bristol, the son of the suspended sheriff, and it was at her house that the marriage of George Fox and Margaret Fell was finally settled.

Sarah, the fourth daughter, married William Meade, who became a minister in the Society of Friends. His name is one of historic importance, as he was fellow-defendant with William Penn in that celebrated trial at the Old Bailey (August 29, 1670), which became a leading case in the law relating to juries. He was a landowner of some importance in the county of Essex. His son Nathaniel severed his connection with Quakerism, became a Serjeant-at-law, was knighted, and died apparently without issue in 1760.

Mary, the fifth daughter, married Thomas Lower, who was perhaps the most helpful, personally, to George Fox of all his wife's sons-in-law. He was brother to the celebrated Richard Lower, M.D., an early Fellow of the Royal Society, and his influence with some of the aristocratic patrons of that society was, as we have seen, successfully exerted to obtain Margaret Fell's first release from imprisonment. Thomas Lower was the owner of a good property in Cornwall, and was one of those Cornishmen who were converted to Quakerism by what they saw and heard of George Fox's demeanour during his cruel imprisonment in Launceston Castle. His first wife was that "Elizabeth Trelawney, a baronet's daughter," whom we have before heard of as convinced by Fox's preaching at Plymouth. Six years after her death Thomas Lower married Mary Fell. His mother-in-law that was to be seems to have at first frowned upon his courtship, but must afterwards have repented of her opposition, for, as has been said, there was no more brave or patient helper of what was called "the

cause of Truth" than Thomas Lower. He shared George Fox's last imprisonment in Worcester Gaol.

Rachel, the youngest daughter, who was only five years old at her father's death, married Daniel Abraham, the son of a merchant at Manchester who had joined the Society of Friends. He bought Swarthmoor Hall of his nephew Squire George's son, about 1690, and it remained in his family for sixty years. Most of the descendants of Margaret Fell who are still members of the Society, Thirnbecks, Graces, Thorps, Shackletons, etc., are derived from this branch of the family, which has contributed of recent times one "clerk" and two "assistant clerks," or in other words one Speaker and two Deputy-Speakers, to the Quaker Parliament.

CHAPTER XIV

VISIT TO AMERICA

THE year 1670, in which Margaret Fell's second imprisonment took place, was, as has been said, one of grievous oppression for Nonconformists generally. The bigoted Cavalier Parliament passed, contrary to the King's wishes, a new and sharper Conventicle Act, by which any meeting for worship otherwise than according to the practice of the Church of England, at which more than four persons should be present, was declared to be an illegal conventicle. Every adult attender at such a meeting was liable to a fine of five shillings for the first offence, and ten shillings for the second, while the preachers thereat were to be fined £20 and £40 respectively. In every case one-third of the fines was to go to the informer—an admirable expedient for the manufacture of scoundrels—magistrates and constables were empowered to break open doors, and deputy-lieutenants and militia officers were to use horse and foot for the dispersion of the illegal assemblies. A strange fulfilment certainly of His Majesty's gracious Declaration from Breda for the relief of tender consciences. In justice to the King it must be repeated that all this blind bigotry was the Parliament's work, not his, and that he only acquiesced in it because the expensive

revelries of Whitehall made him dependent on Parliament for money.

The storm of renewed persecution fell upon the Quaker Society at the beginning of 1671. Fox considers that it was caused by the riotous conduct of a certain John Fox, a Presbyterian minister who tried by force to retain possession of a village church in Wiltshire, where he had been allowed to preach. He asserts that this John Fox was often mistaken for himself (so that people were accustomed to say that George Fox had changed from a Quaker to a Presbyterian), and that this confusion caused it to be supposed that the Friends were resorting to force in order to redress their grievances. This explanation may be true as far as it goes, but it seems clear from the Parliamentary history of the times that other and larger causes were at work to produce the fierce Conventicle Act of 1670.

At any rate Fox was not going to hide his head from the storm which was bursting on his followers. On the first Sunday after the Act came in force, he went to Gracechurch Street, where, as he says, "I expected the storm was most likely to begin." The street was full of people, and soldiers were guarding the entrances, but he contrived to get in, if not to the meeting-house itself, to the court in front of it, where another Friend was then preaching to the people. As soon as he had finished, Fox stood up and preached on the text, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" After he had spoken for some time there came the expected constable with a guard of soldiers, and the informer, who hoped to reap a good harvest of fines from the Quaker preachers. Fox, with two other Friends, was marched off first to the Royal Exchange, and then towards Moorfields, the

mob jeering at the constable and this armed guard, and saying, "Your prisoners will not run away." On the road the informer got into conversation with one of the company, and said, "It will never be a good world till all peeple come to the good old religion that was two hundred years ago." Hereupon George Fox turned sharply round, "Art thou a Papist? What, a Papist informer? Two hundred years ago there was no religion but that of the Papists." The man saw that he had betrayed himself, and when they came to the Lord Mayor's room tried to back out of the case, and refused to give his own name. With difficulty he persuaded the porter to let him out of the house, and when he came into the street, the people gave a ringing shout, "A Papist informer! a Papist informer!" By Fox's desire, the constable and soldiers were sent out to protect the hunted huntsman, which they did, not without difficulty. He was led into a house in a side alley, changed his periwig, and got away unknown.

This ludicrous incident caused the collapse of the case. The Lord Mayor gave the Friends a little fatherly advice on obedience to the Act, asking them why they could not be satisfied to meet together no more than four at a time, since Christ had promised His blessing even to the two or the three; but Fox not unfairly urged the precedent of the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples, whose meetings would certainly have been rendered unlawful by the Conventicle Act, and who would as certainly have disobeyed it. He was soon set at liberty, and when his companions asked him whither he would go, he answered, "To Gracechurch Street meeting, if it be not yet over." Practically, however, when they reached the meeting-house, they

found the meeting at an end; so they went into the house of a Friend, and sent out messengers to inquire how the other meetings in the City had passed off. "I understood," he says, "that at some of the meeting-places Friends were kept out; at others they were taken, but set at liberty again a few days after. A glorious time it was, for the Lord's power came over all, and His everlasting truth got renown. For as fast as some that were speaking were taken down, others were moved of the Lord to stand up and speak, to the admiration of the people; and the more because many Baptists and other sectaries left their public meetings, and came to see how the Quakers would stand. As for the informer aforesaid, he was so frightened, that there durst hardly any informer appear publicly again in London for some time after. But the Mayor, whose name was Samuel Starling, though he carried himself smoothly towards us, proved afterwards a very great persecutor of our Friends, many of whom he cast into prison, as may be seen in the trials of W. Penn, W. Meade and others, at the Old Bailey, this year." This was that celebrated trial to which allusion has already been made, as a leading case on the liberty of the subject, and the rights and duties of jurors.

Through all this year, 1670, the persecution raged without abatement, especially in London. Colonel Kirkby, Fox's old adversary, was forward in the cruel work, going about with a squad of foot-soldiers to break up meetings and drag away the preachers to prison, and always asking if Fox were present, but asking in vain. For in fact, during all the winter months, Fox was laid up at a Friend's house at Stratford, with a strange sickness, the result doubtless of his old hard-

ships in prison. He became blind and deaf, and believed that he was reduced to that condition "as a sign to such as would not see and would not hear the truth." It was generally expected that his sickness would be fatal, and in fact the rumour of his death got abroad both in London and the country; but he had a persuasion that his work was not yet ended. First a little glimmering of sight came back to him; then he grew strong enough to be moved to Enfield, where he spent the rest of the winter; and at last, about April, he was again preaching in the meeting-house at Gracechurch Street, where he says, "though I was yet but weak, the Lord's power upheld, and enabled me to declare His eternal word of life."

And now, in the spring of 1671, his wife being liberated from prison, the reader expects to hear of their having a few quiet years together at peaceful Swarthmoor. Not so. After giving the account of her liberation quoted in the previous chapter, he continues—"I sent down the discharge forthwith by a Friend; by whom also I wrote to her, informing her how to get it delivered to the Justices, and acquainting her that it was upon me from the Lord, to go beyond the seas to visit America; and therefore desired her to hasten to London as soon as she could conveniently after she had obtained her liberty, because the ship was then fitting out for the voyage." She obeyed his directions, joined him at her son-in-law Rous's house at Kingston, and on the 12th of August, 1671, went down with him to Gravesend, to see him off for America on board the "yacht" *Industry*. There was a large party of Friends on board, ten men preachers, including John Rous, besides Fox, and two women, but there does not seem

to have been even a suggestion that Margaret Fox should accompany the husband from whom she had been so strangely parted since their marriage.

The ship in which the Friends sailed was "counted a very swift sailer," but was very leaky, and kept both sailors and passengers working at the pumps night and day. "One day they observed that in two hours' time she sucked in sixteen inches of water at the well." One is often reminded, in reading the account of seventeenth-century voyages, how much the regulations and the inspection insisted upon by the fraternity of under-writers, have since then raised the standard of sea-worthiness in ships, and added to the safety of human life.

There were not only perils of waters, but also perils from sea-robbers to be encountered. A "Sallee man-of-war," or in other words a Barbary pirate, chased the *Industry* for several days. In his distress and anxiety, the master invited George Fox into his cabin, and was comforted and enheartened by his passenger's strong conviction that "the Lord's life and power was placed between us and the ship that pursued us." After the peril was past, and the pursuer had disappeared, he and some of his sailors tried to persuade the passengers that it was not a Turkish pirate that had chased them, but a merchantman going to the Canaries; but on landing at Barbadoes they found that she had been a "Sallee rover" after all.

Though not suffering, like most of the other passengers, from sea-sickness, George Fox, whose constitution, as I have said, was thoroughly broken down, suffered both on the voyage and for some weeks after landing at Barbadoes, from a severe illness, which, from his description of it, looks like a protracted spell of rheu-

matic fever. Happily he was not now in his chilly prison at Scarbro', but in the house of one of the chief merchants of the island, Thomas Rous, himself a Friend, and father of John Rous, Fox's son-in-law and companion. In these circumstances it may be supposed that his bodily comforts were well attended to. Though unable to travel about much, he used his pen freely, and addressed several meetings of Friends held for his convenience at the house of his host. The object of this journey both to the West Indies and to the American continent was not so much to gather in fresh converts, as to impress upon those who had already in large numbers joined the Society, the duty of living holy and righteous lives, and bringing no discredit on their new profession. Like a modern missionary to the dwellers by the Ganges, "he had to warn Friends against allowing their children to marry too young, as at thirteen and fourteen years of age, showing them the inconvenience thereof, and the inconveniences and hurts that attend such childish marriages." "I admonished them," he says, "to purge the floor thoroughly, to sweep their houses very clean, that nothing might remain that would defile, and to take care that nothing be spoken out of their meetings to the blemishing or defaming one of another." The registration of marriages, births, and burials, the provision of convenient burying-places for Friends, and the right appropriation of legacies for charitable purposes, were also carefully provided for by this thoroughly practical apostle of the new community. His language as to slavery is so interesting, in view of the later "testimony" of his followers against all slavery, that it is worth quoting in full. "Then as to their blacks or negroes, I desired them to endeavour to train

them up in the fear of God, those that were bought, and those born in their families, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord; that so with Joshua, every member of a family might say, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' I desired them also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty towards them as the manner of some hath been and is; and *that after certain years of servitude they would make them free.*"

It was during his stay in this island that Fox, with the help of his friends, in answer to some calumnious misrepresentations of their doctrines, drew up a paper—"For the Governor of Barbadoes with his Council and Assembly, and all others in power, both civil and military, in this Island, from the people called Quakers." This paper has attracted a good deal of attention from the fact that it is the nearest approach to a formal creed that the Society has ever promulgated. It has been often reprinted, and is much too long for insertion here; but three important sentences may be quoted. After professing belief in the only wise, omnipotent, and everlasting God, it continues—"And we own and believe in Jesus Christ, His beloved and only begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the express image of the Invisible God, the first-born of every creature, by whom were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by Him. And we do own and believe that He was made a sacrifice for sin, who knew no sin, neither

was guile found in His mouth; that He was crucified for us in the flesh, without the gates of Jerusalem; and that He was buried, and rose again the third day by the power of the Father, for our justification; and that He ascended up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God. This Jesus, who was the foundation of the holy prophets and apostles, is our foundation; and we believe that there is no other foundation to be laid than that which is laid, even Christ Jesus: who tasted death for every man, shed His blood for all men, and is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; according as John the Baptist testified of Him when he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'"

Towards the end of this interesting document, the Friends repel "another slander which had been cast upon them, that they taught the negroes to rebel." This is, they say, "a thing we utterly abhor in our hearts: the Lord knows it, who is the searcher of all hearts, and knows all things, and can testify for us that this is a most abominable untruth. For that which we have spoken to them is to exhort and admonish them to be sober and to fear God, to love their masters and mistresses and to be faithful and diligent in their masters' service and business, and then their masters and overseers would love them and deal gently and kindly with them; also that they should not beat their wives, nor the wives their husbands, neither should the men have many wives; that they should not steal or be drunk, should not commit adultery or fornication, should not curse, swear, lie or give bad words to one another or to any one else; for there is something in them that tells

them they should not practise these or any other evils."

Early in the new year (1672), Fox and four of his friends set sail for Jamaica, which they reached after a week's voyage. They travelled up and down through this island, Oliver Cromwell's great addition to "England beyond the sea," and Fox came to the conclusion that it was "a brave country, though the people in it were, many of them, debauched and wicked." While they were there, the venerable Elizabeth Hooton, one of the little band of missionaries, died. "She was well the day before she died, and departed in peace, like a lamb, bearing testimony to truth at her departure."

On March 8, 1672, they set sail for the American continent. Contrary winds so delayed them, that they were a week sailing backward and forward before they could lose sight of land. Then came great storms as they crossed the Gulf of Florida, and it was not till six or seven weeks after their leaving Jamaica that they finally cast anchor in the Patuxent river, in the province of Maryland, on the western side of the bay of Chesapeake. By far the greater number of the Friends who had found their way to America by the time of George Fox's visit, were settled either in Maryland or in Rhode Island, the natural consequence of the large measure of religious toleration which those two colonies almost alone among the American settlements at this time enjoyed. In Maryland religious freedom was the result of the peculiar position of the founder and proprietor of the colony, Lord Baltimore, who, himself a Roman Catholic, could only obtain for "Holy Church within this province the enjoyment of all her rights and liberties," by guaranteeing "to all free Christian in-

habitants the enjoyment of all such rights and liberties as any natural born subject of England ought to enjoy in the realm of England." [1] In other words, the Papist in Maryland in 1639 had obtained for the extreme Protestant that toleration which the Papist King James II. granted him in England for a short space in 1687.

In Rhode Island the toleration conceded to the Friends was due to the wise counsels of that noble man, who more than any other deserves to be called the Apostle of Toleration, Roger Williams. Williams hated the doctrines of Quakerism, and was willing to debate against them with all the energy of his fiery Welsh nature, but to persecute them, or to expel them from that asylum of free thought, the province of Rhode Island, he steadily refused. Thus in those terrible years 1659—1661, when Massachusetts, under the guidance of the gloomy bigot, John Endicott, was staining her hands indelibly by the blood of the four Quaker Martyrs,[2] Friends had been left unmolested in Rhode Island. Some of George Fox's happiest memories were connected with his visit to his followers in this brave little colony, a visit which he thus describes— "This meeting lasted six days, the first four days being general public meetings for worship, to which abundance of other people came; for they having no priest in the island, and so no restriction to any particular way of worship, and both the governor and deputy-governor, with several justices of the peace, daily frequenting the meetings, this so encouraged the people that they flocked in from all parts of the island. Very good service we

[1] See Gardiner, *History of England*, viii. 180—181 (Ed. 1884).

[2] William Robinson, Marmaduke Robinson, Mary Dyer, and William Leddra, all hung at Boston for no other offence but simply venturing to set foot within the colony.

had amongst them, and truth had a good reception. I have rarely observed people in the state wherein they stood, hear with more attention, diligence, and affection than they generally did, during the four days together, which also was taken notice of by other Friends."

Rhode Island was the only New England colony visited by Fox. Massachusetts, though no longer actually putting Quaker intruders to death, still barred her doors against them, as also did Connecticut, though with somewhat less fierceness of attitude. No one who has studied Fox's character attentively will suppose that it was want of courage which prevented his visiting those colonies. His work on this mission was not so much that of extending, as of "confirming the churches," and apparently in 1672 there were no Quaker churches to confirm in the large colonies of New England.

His time in America was therefore chiefly taken up in the above-mentioned visit to Rhode Island, in labours among the Friends scattered in considerable numbers along the eastern and western shores of the Chesapeake Bay in the colony of Maryland, in a visit to Virginia, "where things were much out of order," and in a short incursion into North Carolina. All these journeys involved the endurance of many hardships. Between Maryland and New England the journey had to be made by land, through "the wilderness country since called New Jersey, not then inhabited by English," so that they often travelled a whole day together without seeing man or woman, house or dwelling-place. In the course of this double journey to and fro across New Jersey, Fox and his companions may have passed almost within sight of the woods on the other side of the river

Delaware, which were one day to give place to the mighty "Quaker City" of Philadelphia.

Such entries as this are of frequent occurrence in the *Journal*—"Our boat being open, the water splashed often in and sometimes over us, so that we were completely wet. Being got to land, we made a fire in the woods to warm and dry us, and there we lay all night, the wolves howling about us." "On the 27th [of January] we had a very precious meeting in a tobacco-house, and next day returned to James Preston's, about eighteen miles distant. When we came there we found his house was burnt to the ground the night before, through the carelessness of a servant; so we lay three nights on the ground by the fire, the weather being cold." "On the 12th of the month [February] we set forward in our boat, and travelling by night, ran aground in a creek near Manokin river. There we were fain to stay till morning, when the tide came and lifted her off. In the meantime, sitting in an open boat, and the weather being bitterly cold, some of us had like to have lost the use of our hands, they were so frozen and benumbed with cold." All these hardships, so unlike the experience of most men who now set forth on a preaching tour, were endured by a man now in full middle life, who was prematurely aged by the rigours of his many imprisonments, and who seems to have had rheumatic fever, or something like it, always hanging about him.

Fox's interest was evidently much aroused by the aboriginal inhabitants of North America. To him, who believed that a certain measure of the Divine Light was vouchsafed to every reasonable human being who was born into the world, and who preached, in some

respects, a more universal gospel than any of his contemporaries, the North American Indians were naturally an interesting field for inquiry, and for evangelistic labour. Not, however, that he was by any means the first to conceive the idea of preaching Christianity to the Indians, for Thomas Mayhew had begun that difficult work nearly thirty years before Fox landed in America, and John Eliot had been prosecuting it since 1646 with considerable success.[1] Still, considering the comparatively short time that Fox spent in America, his references to the Indians are numerous and valuable. When he was in North Carolina, he had a friendly reception from the Governor and his wife, but a doctor who was at the Government House insisted on controversy. "And truly," says Fox, "his opposing us was of good service, giving occasion for the opening of many things to the people concerning the light and Spirit of God, which he denied to be in every one, and affirmed that it was not in the Indians. Whereupon I called an Indian to us, and asked him, 'Whether or not, when he lied or did wrong to any one, there was not something in him that reproved him for it?' He said, 'There was such a thing in him that did so reprove him, and he was ashamed when he had done wrong or spoken wrong.' So we shamed the doctor before the Governor and the people, insomuch that the poor man ran out so far that at length he would not own the Scriptures."

At one of his earliest meetings on the eastern shore of Maryland, Fox felt himself called to invite "the Indian Emperor and his kings" to attend the meeting. The Emperor came punctually; his kings, who were

[1] See Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, 201—204.

further off, could not reach it in time, "yet they came afterwards with their cockarooses." "I had," he says, "in the evening two good opportunities with them; they heard the word of the Lord willingly, and confessed to it. What I spoke to them, I desired them to speak to their people, and let them know that God was raising up His tabernacle of witness in their wilderness country, and was setting up His standard and glorious ensign of righteousness. They carried themselves very courteously and lovingly, and inquired 'where the next meeting would be, and they would come to it'; yet they said they 'had had a great debate with their council about their coming before they came now.'" So too in the wilderness that was afterwards New Jersey, on Long Island, in the colony of Delaware, in Virginia, Fox on several occasions met the Red-skinned huntsmen, sometimes an "Emperor" again, sometimes a priest or "Pawaw," always no doubt very dimly comprehending what the leather-garmented medicine-man from over the big water wished to convey to them, but always behaving with stately courtesy to the stranger, and "sitting soberly" among the white men till the end of the meeting. Perhaps in some instances there was more comprehension of the Quaker apostle's message than these words would imply. At James Preston's house on the Patuxent river (that house the burning of which some months afterwards caused the travellers to bivouac for three nights in the open air), "there came to us," says Fox, "an Indian King with his brother, to whom I spoke, and found they understood what I spoke of."

At length Fox felt his American mission ended. On May 21, 1673, he and his friends set sail for England.

They had for some days foul weather and contrary winds, and it was not till May 31 that they got past the capes of Virginia and out into the open sea. From that time onwards, however, they had favourable, though tempestuous winds, "the waves rising like mountains, so that the master and sailors wondered at it, and said they never saw the like before." On June 28 they reached Bristol, having been absent from England rather more than a year and ten months.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST IMPRISONMENT

HAVING landed at Shirehampton, Fox was rejoined at Bristol by his wife, who came thither with two of her daughters, and her son-in-law Thomas Lower, and was also met by William Penn and several other Friends from different parts of the country. A great fair was held at Bristol apparently in September, and in connection therewith Fox, unmolested notwithstanding the Conventicle Act, held many "glorious and powerful meetings," at one of which he preached a sermon on the "Three Estates and Three Teachers," of which he gives us an abstract. The first estate is that of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and their teacher, God. The second estate is that of the Fall, and is caused by the teaching of the Serpent. The third estate is the dispensation of Life and Power, under the teaching of Christ Jesus, "the true gospel-teacher, who bruises the head of the Serpent, the false teacher, and the head of all false teachers and of all false religions, false ways, false worships, and false churches."

After some journeyings in the southern counties, and a visit with his wife to her son-in-law John Rous at Kingston-on-Thames, Fox spent several weeks in London, where he had many controversies with the

Baptists and Socinians, and "with some old apostates, grown very rude, who had printed many books against the Friends."

After some time they started, a little family party, on the journey from London to Swarthmoor. The party consisted of George Fox and his wife, her youngest and still unmarried daughter Rachel, and Thomas Lower, the Cornish son-in-law, who was going down to Swarthmoor to fetch his wife and child from thence. They halted by the way at William Penn's house at Rickmansworth (in fact it was here that Lower joined them), and then passed on through Oxfordshire, into Worcestershire. Fox had received a message that his mother, now probably an old woman of eighty, was on her deathbed, and longed to see him before she died. He therefore intended to part company from his wife in Warwickshire, accomplish this visit to old Mary Fox at Fenny Drayton, and return to London for a time. But the separation of husband and wife came sooner than was intended, and the farewells of mother and son were never said. After a large meeting held in a barn at Armscott, near Stratford-on-Avon, a magistrate named Parker, and a clergyman named Hains, came to the farmer's house where they were sitting, and apprehended Fox and Lower. The parson and squire had intended to be present at the meeting, in order to give personal testimony to its illegal holding, but as Parker's baby had been baptized that morning they had sat a little too long over their wine at the christening-festival, and so had missed their opportunity. This defect of testimony seems to have tainted with irregularity most of their subsequent proceedings. However, there was little doubt that the meeting in

Armscott barn was a defiance of the Conventicle Act. Parker made out what Fox calls "a strange sort of *mittimus*," and sent him and Lower to prison, while Margaret Fox and her daughters were suffered to proceed on their homeward journey, under the escort of a Friend, a merchant from Bristol, who, as Fox said, "seemed to have met us providentially to assist my wife and her daughter in their journey homewards, when by our imprisonment they were deprived of our company and help."

George Fox had had some foreshadowings in his soul of the coming trouble, to which he alludes in the following letter to his wife, written from Worcester Gaol, as soon as he thought she would have reached her home.

"Dear Heart,

"Thou seemedst to be a little grieved when I was speaking of prisons, and when I was taken: be content with the will of the Lord God. For when I was at John Rous's at Kingston I had a sight of my being taken prisoner, and when I was at Bray Dolly's in Oxfordshire [the night before the arrest], I saw I was taken, and I saw I had a suffering to undergo. But the Lord's power is over all; blessed be His holy name for ever.

"G. F."

The imprisonment in Worcester Gaol, thus begun, lasted, in a fashion, for fourteen months (December 17, 1673—February 12, 1675), but it had many interruptions, and it was not nearly so severe as any of his previous incarcerations. Thomas Lower, who had

influential friends at Court, might have been set at liberty after a few weeks if he would have accepted freedom for himself alone. Writing to his wife on "the 7th of 11th month 1673" (January 7, 1674), he says—"I have received several letters from London from my brother [Dr. Lower, the King's physician] touching my liberty, and a letter from the King's bedchamber man [Henry Savile] to the Lord Windsor [Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire], his brother[-in-law], but since it only relates to my particular enlargement, I have kept it by me unsent. I thought it might prejudice and hinder my father's enlargement if I accepted of it; for I prize his liberty more than my own, and so have written to my brother if he cannot obtain both our discharges, not to labour any farther for mine."[1]

There were long and tedious proceedings, both at Quarter Sessions and Assizes, of which George Fox does not give a very clear account, and with which it is not necessary to weary the reader. It seems pretty clear that for lack of evidence there was no case against the prisoners under the Conventicle Act; that they ought to have been discharged; and that there was a strong party among the magistrates in favour of their liberation; but that Parker, egged on by a clergyman named Crowder, pressed for imprisonment, and accomplished his purpose by the easy injustice of tendering the oaths and insisting on the penalty of *Praemunire*. This clergyman, Dr. Crowder, furnished an amusing instance of the proverbial ill-fortune of listeners. After one of Fox's appearances before the magistrates, Lower remained behind, and in the course of some conversation

[1] From the Shackleton MSS. quoted in the *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, p. 287.

with the magistrates, who were evidently anxious to avoid taking harsh measures with the brother of the King's physician, Justice Parker said to him, "Do you think, Mr. Lower, that I had not cause to send your father and you to prison, when you had so great a meeting that the parson of the parish complained to me that he has lost the greatest part of his parishioners, so that when he comes among them he has scarcely any auditors left?" "I have heard," replied Thomas Lower, "that the priest of that parish comes so seldom to visit his flock (but once, it may be, or twice in a year, to gather up his tithes) that it was but charity in my father to visit so forlorn and forsaken a flock; and therefore thou hadst no cause to send my father to prison for visiting them or for teaching, instructing, and directing them to Christ, their true teacher; seeing they had so little comfort or benefit from their pretended pastor, who comes among them only to seek his gain from his quarter." "Upon this the Justices fell a-laughing, for it seems Dr. Crowder (who was the priest they spoke of) was then in the room, sitting among them, though Thomas Lower did not know him; and he had the wit to hold his tongue, and not undertake to vindicate himself in a matter so notoriously known to be true."

It is evident that Fox, in this imprisonment, was on better terms with his keepers, and probably better treated by them than either at Launceston or Lancaster. He walked to and fro between gaol and court-house unguarded, or nominally guarded by a little boy of eleven years old. When the magistrates resolved to let him out on bail, the gaoler's son offered to be bound for him. After an earnest appeal to the principles of

Christianity made at one of the Quarter Sessions, "the people were generally tender, as if they had been in a meeting." Nevertheless it all ended in the infamous sentence of *Praemunire*, for refusal of the oath of allegiance, though Fox tendered in lieu of the oath a paper in which he went further than many Conservative politicians would like to follow him to-day, in acknowledging the Divinely ordained kingship of Charles II.[1]

The Court, as we have seen, was favourably disposed towards Fox at this time, and he was offered his release by way of pardon from the crown, but he steadfastly refused to accept any such way of escape, looking upon it as not agreeable to the innocency of his cause. The end of the whole matter was that Fox was brought up to London by the under-sheriff on February 8, 1675. His case came on before Chief Justice Hale and three puisne judges at the King's Bench. The errors in the indictment (which seem to have been many, and to show that a bungler had been at work here as well as in the magistrates' court at Lancaster) were pointed out and insisted on by Mr. Corbet, George Fox's counsel, but he also raised the important objection, "that they could not imprison any man upon a *Praemunire*."

[1] This paper, which any reasonable Christian Government should surely have gladly accepted as an equivalent for the oath of allegiance, began thus:—

"This I do in the truth and in the presence of God declare, that King Charles the Second is lawful King of this realm and all other his dominions; that he was brought in and set up King over this realm by the power of God; and I have nothing but goodwill to him and all his subjects, and desire his prosperity and eternal good." The last sentence is—

"I dare not take an oath because it is forbidden by Christ and the apostle, but if I break my Yea or Nay, let me suffer the same penalty as they that break their oaths.

"GEORGE FOX."

Some of Fox's enemies wanted the Chief Justice to put the oath to him once more, urging that he was a dangerous man to be at liberty, but that noble judge answered, "he had indeed heard some such reports, but he had also heard many more good reports of him;" and thus, largely no doubt through Hale's influence, Fox regained his freedom, as he triumphantly says, "without receiving any pardon, or coming under any obligation or engagement at all." "Counsellor Corbet, who pleaded for me, obtained great fame by it, for many of the lawyers came to him and told him he had brought that to light which had not been known before, as to the not imprisoning upon a *Praemunire;* and after the trial a judge said to him, 'You have attained a great deal of honour by pleading George Fox's cause so in court.'" [1]

[1] My friend W. C. Braithwaite, of Lincoln's Inn, whom I have consulted as to this trial, writes to me—

"I can find no case in the books respecting the *Praemunire* of George Fox in 1674. On looking carefully at the passage in the *Journal*, it is evident that there was no decision on the point raised by Counsellor Corbet. He raised the question with sufficient force to cause the judges to adjourn the case for further argument. But 'the next day they chose rather to let this plea fall, and begin with the errors of the indictment.' It was on these errors that the indictment was quashed; and it is to be noticed that the praise given to Corbet was for raising the question so forcibly, and not for having actually obtained a decision upon it."

CHAPTER XVI

CLOSING YEARS

The fifteen remaining years of George Fox's life must be sketched in this, as in all his other biographies, much more briefly than those which have preceded them. From this point onward there is somewhat of a change in the character of the *Journal*, which becomes much more of a mere register of documents issued by Fox, and has few of the characteristic and almost humorous touches which give life to its earlier pages. Nor are indications wanting that in mind as well as in body George Fox was a prematurely aged man. His devotion to the cause of spiritual religion, which he believed himself called to promote, is as intense as ever, his zeal in its service, as far as his bodily infirmities will allow him to display it, is unabated, but there is not so much freshness of idea as aforetime, and there are several instances of the tendency of old age to re-issue its old thought-currency.

Yet for the future life and permanence of the Society which he had almost unwittingly founded, these years of calm reflective old age were probably quite as important as the more picturesque and adventurous years of his early apostolate. For questions had now arisen in that Society, similar to those which had agitated the

wider religous world of the English nation, and on the solution of these questions (ultimately effected by the personal authority and influence of George Fox himself) the very existence of the Society probably depended.

Quakerism had been at the outset essentially individual in its character. George Fox's own individual musings and meditations when he was wandering over the fields of Leicestershire had given the impulse to the new movement. He had appealed to what he called the Inward Light, or the voice of the Divine Spirit in the hearts of his hearers, and on those facts of their own individual consciousness, rather than on any external Church authority, he had based his religious teaching. For some years the "Children of Light," as they at first called themselves, had existed and had multiplied, possessing none but the very slightest formal bond of union, or system of Church government. Then the disorders which had arisen under this system of unchecked Individualism having convinced Fox of the necessity of a change, he had, as we have seen, with much real statesmanship, as well as with invincible patience, succeeded in establishing what were called "Meetings for discipline"; first Yearly Meetings (in 1658), then Quarterly Meetings (from 1660 onwards), and lastly Monthly Meetings (from 1666 to 1669). By all these meetings the principle of absolute Individualism, the claim of each member to do what was right in his or her own eyes, was checked and bounded, and the right of the Church to arrange for the orderly holding of meetings for worship, the maintenance of the poor, the decorous celebration of marriages, the registration of births and deaths, even

to some extent to control the business relations of the members to one another, was recognized and enforced. It seems also (though this is a point which has been often lost sight of) that some pecuniary provision was made by the new Church for the maintenance of those travelling preachers who were too poor to support themselves.[1]

Against all this machinery of Church government, and to a certain extent against the authority of Fox himself, as chief adviser of the body which had been called into existence by his teaching, there was, about 1675, a formidable movement of revolt. It was not quite the first time that a discordant note had been sounded in the new community. There had been, as we have seen (about 1656), a tendency to set up the authority of the strange enthusiast James Naylor against that of his chief. Then (about 1661), a certain John Perrot, who had gone to Rome to convert the Pope, and had spent some time in the prisons of the Inquisition, started on his return a crusade against the practice of uncovering the head in public prayer, thus caricaturing Fox's own "testimony" against taking off the hat to his fellow-men.[2] But this schism soon died away. Perrot left the Society of Friends, went to America, and "fell into manifest sensualities and works of the flesh, for he not only wore gaudy apparel, but also a sword, and being got into some place in the Government, he became a severe exacter of oaths,

[1] All these points are well brought out in Barclay's *Inner Life of Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, chapters xviii. and xix.

[2] Sewel, the Quaker historian, says of Perrot, "as one error proceeds from another, so he made another extravagant step, and let his beard grow; in which he was followed by some." (*Hist. of Society of Friends*, ii. 315. Ed. 1833.)

whereas before he had professed that for conscience' sake he could not swear."[1]

The schism, however, which now (about the year 1675) threatened the disruption of the Society, and which is known by the name of Wilkinson and Story's Separation, was a much less fantastic, and therefore much more formidable affair than Perrot's hat and beard vagaries. The two men who headed it, John Wilkinson and John Story, were eminent preachers among the Friends, and had probably often worked side by side with Fox himself.[2] But they insisted, like the Independents, on the right of each congregation to transact its own affairs uncontrolled by any central body. "They regarded with great jealousy the Central Yearly Meeting of London, which they compared to a High Court of Judicature, and declared it would become a New Rome in time. They made use of the principle which Perrot had enunciated, 'that the fellowship of the Spirit did not stand in outward forms,' against the form of Church government established by Fox. When asked, 'Ought not Christian Churches to deny' (or excommunicate) 'for breach of fundamental articles?' they answered, that if such articles were against the Light of Christ in individual consciences, was not the requiring of submission an infringement of Christian liberty? If these outward forms were to be obeyed at a moment when the Spirit of God did not move an individual

[1] Sewel, *Hist. of Society of Friends*, ii. 315.

[2] John Wilkinson is erroneously identified by Barclay (*Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 441) with the clergyman of Broughton who turned Quaker (Fox's *Journal*, I. 393), and who, as is there mentioned, died in 1675.

to obey, how was 'New Light' again to break forth to God's glory?" [1]

Moreover, the Separatists objected to that law of the Society by which all its members were required to abstain from payment of tithes on pain of disownment, saying that each individual should be left to act according to the dictates of his own conscience. Herein they seem to have borne a useful testimony against what has always been the besetting sin of Quakerism, a disposition to insist that if nine members feel a conscientious scruple against doing a certain thing, the tenth member shall feel it likewise.

But when it came to defending the practice of fleeing in time of persecution, and discontinuing the usual meetings of Friends in order to escape the cruel provisions of the Conventicle Act, one can see that the very existence of the new Society, and it might almost be said the cause of religious freedom in England, were at stake, and that with all their bold words on behalf of Individualism, these opposers of all Church authority in the new community would, if victorious, soon have had neither community nor individuals left. In fact, Wilkinson and Story, though there are some things in their teaching which look like the legitimate outcome of Quaker doctrines, were at heart more nearly akin to the "Seekers" or the "Ranters" than to the Friends, and probably had their cause triumphed over the steady opposition of Fox and his chief supporters, the Quakers would have faded away into the same limbo of forgotten religions in which both "Seekers" and "Ranters" now lie entombed.

[1] I have borrowed some sentences here from Barclay's *Inner Life*, etc., p. 465.

The literary part of the controversy against the new schismatics was left chiefly to Robert Barclay and Thomas Ellwood, the friend of Milton. The former wrote a short treatise on *The Anarchy of the Ranters;* and the latter, in a work which he believed to be a poem, and which he entitled *Rogero Mastix,* chastised the yet more prosaic verses in which a certain William Rogers of Bristol had championed the cause of Wilkinson and Story.

Eventually the schism was ended by the apparent victory of the party in favour of Fox's Church organization, but it is the opinion of a careful inquirer[1] that the views of the defeated party were in some measure adopted by the Society at large, and that the Quietism which prevailed among Friends throughout the eighteenth century, was in a certain sense the result of the Separatist movement of 1675.

It is the life of Fox, not the history of Quakerism, with which we are here concerned, but so much as this it seemed necessary to say, in order to explain many pages of his *Journal,* and the chief occupation of his closing years. Such passages as this are of frequent occurence—

"I wrote answers to divers papers concerning the running out of some who had opposed the order of the gospel, and had stirred up much strife and contention in Westmoreland."

"Some that professed truth, and had made a great show therein, being gone from the simplicity of the gospel into jangling, division, and a spirit of separation, endeavoured to discourage Friends, especially the women,[2]

[1] Barclay, *Inner Life,* p. 472.

[2] For some reason, which is not very clear, the women's meetings

from their godly care and watchfulness in the church over one another in the truth; opposing their meetings, which in the power of the Lord were set up for that end and service."

At Bristol (1677), "Many sweet and precious meetings we had; many Friends being there from several parts of the nation, some on account of trade, and some in the service of truth. Great was the love and unity of Friends that abode faithful in the truth, though some who were gone out of the holy unity and were run into strife, division, and enmity, were rude and abusive, and behaved themselves in a very unchristian manner towards me. But the Lord's power was over all; by which being preserved in heavenly patience which can bear injuries for His Name's sake, I felt dominion therein over the rough, rude, and unruly spirits, and left them to the Lord, who knew my innocency, and would plead my cause. The more these laboured to reproach and vilify me, the more did the love of Friends that were sensible and upright-hearted abound towards me, and some that had been betrayed by the adversaries, seeing their envy and rude behaviour, broke off from them, who have cause to bless the Lord for their deliverance."

Owing to Fox's broken health, there were sometimes now considerable pauses in his hitherto incessant journeyings. At two separate intervals he spent about four years restfully at Swarthmoor,[1] perhaps the happiest

for business were the subject of especial opposition from the Separatists.

[1] The first time, 1675 6, of which Margaret Fox says, "This was the first time that he came to Swarthmoor after we were married, and he stayed there much of two years." The second time, 1679-80, of which she says, "He came into the North to

part of his life, though hurried over in the *Journal* almost as though he were ashamed of having allowed himself so long a rest by the wayside.

When Fox first appeared in the old Lancashire manor-house after his liberation from Worcester, he received a visit from his former oppressor, Colonel Kirkby, who came to bid him welcome into the country, and "carried himself to all appearance very lovingly." True, he afterwards sent a message by the Ulverston constables that there must be no more meetings at Swarthmoor, and if there were such they had orders to break them up. But on the very next Sunday the Friends had "a very precious meeting," quite undisturbed by the constables, and so they continued ever after. In fact, as far as can be discerned from Fox's *Journal*, the Conventicle Act, though still enforced spasmodically in London, had become little more than a dead letter in the north of England, the persecution of Friends, which was still bitter, being generally for non-payment of tithes, or on the easy ground of their refusal to take an oath, which enabled the magistrates to proceed against them as "Papist recusants."

Another of Fox's old antagonists was the Rev. William Lampitt, formerly the "Established" minister of Ulverston, but since St. Bartholomew's Day an ejected minister. A good man, we may surely believe, perhaps correctly described by Calamy as "a warm and lively preacher"; certainly one whose sacrifices for conscience' sake entitled him to more respectful notice than is contained in the following sentences from Fox's

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Swarthmoor again, and stayed this time near two years; and then he grew weakly, being troubled with pains and aches, having had many sore and long travels, beatings, and hard imprisonments."

Journal—"In 1676,[1] while I was at Swarthmoor, died William Lampitt, the old priest of Ulverston, which parish Swarthmoor is in. He was an old deceiver, a perverter of the right way of the Lord, and a persecutor of the people of God. Much contest I had with him when I first came into those parts. He had been an old false prophet; for in 1652 he prophesied (and said he would wage his life upon it) that the Quakers would all vanish and come to nought within half a year, but he came to nought himself. For he continued in this lying and false accusing of God's people till a little before he died, and then he cried for a little rest. To one of his hearers that came to visit him before he died, he said, 'I have been a preacher a long time, and thought I had lived well; but I did not think it had been so hard a thing to die.'"

During these long periods of quiescence at Swarthmoor, Fox was busy with his pen, writing epistles to the Yearly Meeting, and "a book of the types and figures of Christ with their significations," collecting the papers which he had addressed to Oliver and Richard Cromwell, and to Charles II., providing materials for a future history of Quakerism, and so on. In company with his friend and fellow-traveller in America, John Burnyeat, he answered what he calls "a very envious and wicked book which Roger Williams, a priest of New England (or some colony thereabout), had written against truth and Friends." The envious and wicked book was no doubt Williams's *George Fox digged out of his Burrowes*, published at Boston in 1676. This probably seemed to Fox a very unscrupulous attack, and one

[1] Calamy says, "he lived obscurely [after his ejection] and dy'd Anno 1677."

that absolutely required a reply; but he can hardly have been aware how much the cause of religious freedom owed to Roger Williams and his colony of Rhode Island; otherwise he would have spoken more respectfully of his antagonist.

In 1677, Fox paid a short visit[1] to the Continent, in company with William Penn, Robert Barclay, George Keith,[2] and some others. His wife was not of the party, but was represented by her third daughter Isabel. The chief object of the travellers seems to have been to visit the Friends in Holland, where there were by this time a pretty large number of adherents to the new Society. Holland must have been now only just beginning to recover from the terrible strain of that great five years' war with Louis XIV., in which she had been brought to the brink of ruin, and had been only saved by the valour of young William of Orange, and by the desperate expedient of opening the dykes, and laying the country under water. We have, however, no allusion in the *Journal* to these exciting events, except that when the travellers drew near the frontier of East Friesland, "there came many officers rushing into the boat, and being somewhat in drink they were very rude. I spoke to them" (says Fox), "exhorting them to fear the Lord and beware of Solomon's vanities. They were boisterous fellows, yet somewhat more civil afterwards." We have also an address from Fox's pen "to the ambassadors who were met to treat for Peace at the city of Nimeguen in the States dominions." The address is chiefly about the wickedness of war, and its inconsistency with the spirit of the Gospel. "Is it not

[1] July 25 to October 23.
[2] In later life a great opponent of Quakerism.

a sad thing," he says, "for Christians to be biting and consuming one another in the sight of the Turks, Tartars, Jews, and Heathens, when they should love one another and do unto all men as they would have them do unto them? Such devouring work as this will open the mouth of Jews and Turks, Tartars and Heathens, to blaspheme the name of Christ, and cause them to speak evil of Christianity, for them to see how the unity of the Spirit is broken among such as profess Christ and Christ's peace." Certainly the diplomacy of Christian Europe did not shine in the negotiations of Nimeguen. The great personages charged with the conclusion of the treaty entered that town in February 1676 (more than a year before Fox's visit to Holland), and it was not till August 1678 that they concluded what Macaulay has well styled "the hollow and unsatisfactory treaty by which the distractions of Europe were for a time suspended."

An interesting event in Fox's journey to Holland was the visit paid by George Keith's wife and Fox's step-daughter Isabel Yeamans to the Princess Elizabeth. This lady was a daughter of Frederick, Elector Palatine (the "Winter King" of Bohemia), and our Princess Elizabeth. Like her brothers and sisters, she had experienced strange reverses of fortune, and she showed much of that originality of character which—perhaps on account of those very reverses—the members of this family generally displayed.

There was Charles Louis, the eldest son, who well-nigh broke his mother's heart by his selfishness and ingratitude; there were Rupert and Maurice, those Paladins of the Civil War, whose lives had such different endings, Rupert the chemist and the inventor

spending his old age at the Court of Charles II., while Maurice, still young, and flying westwards before the victorious Blake, sank out of sight in the waters of the Antilles. Youngest of the band was the handsome and sprightly Sophia, who had now been for some twenty years married to Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover; who, dying at eighty-four, only missed by two months being proclaimed Queen of England, and who was in fact the ancestress of all our royal Georges, and of our present Queen Victoria. Twelve years older than the Electress Sophia, and utterly unlike her in disposition, was the calm and unworldly Elizabeth, who, after refusing some brilliant offers of marriage, spent her middle or later life as Protestant Abbess of Herford, a position which, as the convent had been long ago sequestered, brought with it no religious obligations, but gave the holder an income and some little territorial jurisdiction. She had come before this time under the influence of that interesting, but not altogether satisfactory enthusiast, Jean Labadie—a Jesuit who turned Protestant and something more—and his teaching, which has been described as "something like a French Quakerism, but with ingredients from older Anabaptism,"[1] had prepared her to listen with favour to the words of Fox and his disciples. She had been already visited by Penn and Barclay, and had addressed to the latter an epistle from which the following is an extract.

"Your memory is dear to me, so are your lives, and your exhortations very necessary. I confess myself still spiritually very poor and naked; all my happiness is that I do know I am so, and whatsoever I have

[1] Masson, *Life of Milton*, v. 595.

seemed or studied heretofore is but as dust in comparison to the true knowledge of Christ. I confess also my infidelity to this light, by suffering myself to be conducted by a false politique light; now that I have sometimes a small glimpse of the True Light I do not attend to it as I should, being drawn away by the works of my calling, which must be done. Like your swift English hounds, I often overrun my scent, being called back when it is too late. Let not this make you less earnest in your prayers for me; you see I need them. Your letters will be always welcome to me, so shall your friends if any please to visit me.

"I should admire God's providence if my brother [Prince Rupert] could be a means of releasing your father,[1] and the forty more prisoners in Scotland. Having promised to do his best, I know he will perform it; he has always been true to his word; and you shall find me by the grace of God a true friend.

"ELIZABETH."[2]

Following up the invitation contained in this letter, the two Quaker ladies, Mrs. Yeamans and Mrs. Keith, with a Dutch woman-Friend to act as interpreter, went to visit the Princess in her home at Herford in Westphalia, taking with them a long letter from George Fox, which began as follows—

"PRINCESS ELIZABETH,

"I have heard of thy tenderness towards the Lord and His holy truth, by some Friends that have

[1] Colonel David Barclay, once an officer in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, at this time a Quaker, and imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Aberdeen.

[2] Quoted in the *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, pp. 302-3.

visited thee, and also by some of thy letters which I have seen. It is indeed a great thing for a person of thy quality to have such a tender mind after the Lord and His precious truth, seeing so many are swallowed up with voluptuousness and the pleasures of this world; yet all make an outward profession of God and Christ one way or other, but without any deep inward sense and feeling of Him." When we remember that the Princess was first cousin to Charles II., and that most of her kindred were more or less hangers-on to the pleasure-loving Court at Whitehall, the hint about "voluptuousness" is seen to be singularly appropriate, and in truth, the contrast between that Court and the old Abbey of Herford must have been about as striking as any that Europe could exhibit.

The Princess sent the following reply to Fox's letter—

"Dear Friend,

"I cannot but have a tender love to those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to whom it is given, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him; therefore your letter and your friends' visit have been both very welcome to me. I shall follow their and your counsel as far as God will afford me light and unction, remaining still your loving friend,

"Elizabeth.

"Herford, the 30th of August, 1677."

Soon afterwards Penn and Barclay paid their second visit to Herford, and were received with even more cordiality than on their first. The royal Abbess of Herford seems indeed to have become virtually a

Friend, and during the few remaining years of her life (she died in 1680) she kept up a pretty frequent correspondence with the leading members of the Society, exerting what influence she could with her relatives at Whitehall on behalf especially of the Scottish Friends who were suffering imprisonment.

Fox's Continental journey extended to North Germany as well as Holland. He visited Emden, Oldenburg ("lately a great and famous place, but then burnt down, and but few houses left standing in it"), Bremen, Hamburg, and penetrated some way into "the Duke of Holstein's country." The whole visit occupied him three months (July 25 to October 23, 1677), and it was repeated on a smaller scale seven years afterwards (June 4 to July 17, 1684). He occasionally had an argument with a Calvinist divine, or a Baptist teacher, but his visit was chiefly directed to those who were already Friends, and it may be suggested that the necessity of speaking through an interpreter, and the impossibility of exchanging quick theological repartee with the travellers by the wayside, somewhat cramped his energies, and prevented him from undertaking a wider and longer campaign.

At this time there was a considerable number of adherents to the new Society in many parts of Central Europe. There was also a tolerably large congregation of Friends at Dantzic, who were cruelly oppressed by the Lutheran magistrates of that city. Their sufferings lay very heavy on Fox's heart, and he several times addressed long letters, both to their nominal sovereign, John III., King of Poland, and to the city magistrates, pleading for some respite to the persecuted and im-

prisoned Quakers. The Quakers in Holland seem to have been largely drawn from the very similar body of the Mennonites, and this chiefly under the preaching of William Caton, that young Swarthmoor convert of George Fox's, of whom some description has been given in an earlier chapter.[1]

It is interesting to note that in the interval between Fox's two visits to the Continent, one of the most celebrated Mennonite teachers entirely changed his attitude towards Quakerism, and from an opponent became a supporter of the new teaching. This was Dr. Galenus Abrahams, a Mennonite with some tendency towards Socinianism. At Fox's first visit there was a five hours' discussion between this man and Fox, assisted by Penn. Abrahams maintained a favourite thesis of the English "Seekers," "that there was no Christian Church ministry or commission Apostolical now in the world." One might have thought that this was an argument to be held rather against a stout champion of Apostolical Succession than against a theological free-lance such as Fox; but he also contended—and here we see how his doctrine would cut at the root of Fox's ministry—"that nobody now-a-days could be accepted as a messenger of God, unless he confirmed the same by miracles." The discussion was not a very satisfactory one, having all to be conducted through an interpreter, but it seems to have been generally considered that the Quakers had the best of it. The greatest share of the argument on their side was taken by William Penn. George Fox, as we are told by the Quaker historian Sewel (himself a friend and former disciple of Abrahams), "spake also

[1] See p. 73.

something to the matter, but he, being somewhat short-breathed, went several times away, which some were ready to impute to a passionate temper; but I well know that herein they wronged him." But evidently Abrahams thought that his opponent was too fierce, and shrank, as others had done before him, from the still undimmed lustre of those flashing eyes. "He was then," says Fox, speaking of the earlier visit and the disputation which was held between them—"he was then very high and shy, so that he would not let me touch him nor look upon him by his good-will, but bid me 'keep my eyes off him, for,' he said, 'they pierced him.' But now he was very loving and tender, and confessed in some measure to Truth. His wife also and daughters were tender and kind, and we parted from them very lovingly."[1]

After Fox's return from his first Continental journey (1677), with the exception of one year (1679), spent in retirement at Swarthmoor, he passed most of his time in London and its suburbs, sometimes making short excursions into the home counties. It is not very clear where he abode when actually in London, but the hospitable shelter of Kingston-on-Thames, where dwelt his son-in-law, the West Indian merchant, John Rous, with his wife Margaret (daughter of Margaret Fox), was ever ready to receive him when pining for the fresh air of the country. His relation to this worthy couple, as to all his wife's daughters and their husbands, seems to have been most friendly and cordial, nor is there ever a sign of a welcome out-stayed at

[1] For some account of Galenus Abrahams, consult, besides G. F.'s *Journal*, Sewel's *History of Friends*, iv. 25; and Barclay's *Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, pp. 174, 251.

their hospitable houses. In 1683, he records a special visit of a week paid to Kingston, the occasion being that "my son Rous's daughter Margaret lay very sick and had a desire to see me." The young grand-daughter, like her ancestress, felt the power of goodness in the preacher of the Inward Light, and longed to clasp his hand if she was about to fare forth into the Unknown.[1]

One reason why these latter years of Fox's life were for the most part spent in London and its neighbourhood was that his presence there was still needed, in order to counteract the efforts of the Separatists Wilkinson and Story, allusions to whom are frequent in this part of the *Journal*. Another was, that from the year 1681 onwards, after the defeat of the Exclusion Bill and the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, there was a spasm of fresh and fierce persecution against Friends under the Conventicle Act, which had been perhaps growing somewhat rusty under the Whiggish Parliaments of 1679 and 1681. The pages of the *Journal* give us a vivid picture of the scenes enacted under this monstrous statute.

"One First-day it was upon me to go to Devonshire House meeting in the afternoon, and because I had heard Friends were kept out there that morning I went sooner, and got into the yard before the soldiers came to guard the passages; but the constables were there

[1] The young Margaret did not die at this time. Perhaps it would have been better for her if she had, for there were storms of some kind or other in her after-life. In her father's will, dated October 20, 1692, there is a bequest of ten pounds only "unto my daughter Margaret, who hath several ways disobliged me," with power to her mother to appoint her a further sum of £500 "if after my decease she shall by her obedient and dutiful carriage oblige" her said mother. *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, p. 390.

before me and stood in the doorway with their staves. I asked them to let me go in; they said, they could not nor durst not, for they were commanded the contrary, and were sorry for it. I told them I would not press upon them. So I stood by, and they were very civil. I stood till I was weary, and then one gave me a stool to sit down on, and after a while the power of the Lord began to spring up among Friends, and one began to speak. The constables soon forbade him, and said he should not speak, and he not stopping, they began to be wroth. But I gently laid my hand upon one of the constables, and wished him to let him alone. The constable did so, and was quiet, and the man did not speak long."

Fox himself then rose and spoke, telling the intruders that they need not come with swords and staves against them, for they were a peaceable people, not met to plot against the Government, but to worship God under the spiritual presidency of Christ. His short sermon ended, he knelt down to pray. "The power of the Lord," continues Fox, "was over all. The people, the constables, and the soldiers all put off their hats. When the meeting was ended and the Friends began to pass away, the chief constable put off his hat, and desired the Lord to bless us: for the power of the Lord was over him and the people and kept them under."

Another Sunday, Fox goes to the meeting at Gracechurch Street, and finds three constables there keeping the Friends out, and accordingly they meet in the courtyard. After some time of silence, Fox stands up to preach. After he has spoken some time, one of the constables comes and takes him by the hand, telling him he must come down. "Be patient," says Fox, and con-

tinues his sermon; but after a little while the constable pulls him down, and marches him off into the meeting-house. "Are you not weary of this work?" asks Fox; and one of them answers, "Indeed we are."

If space allowed, several other passages of this kind could be quoted, most of which show both magistrates and police heartily ashamed of the foolish and tyrannical acts which the wisdom of Parliament had ordered them to perform. In reading page after page of this legalized lawlessness, one feels it to be a marvel that the English people should now possess that character which is in truth theirs, of a law-abiding people.

When the sky is a little lightened it is from an unexpected quarter. These last two years of the reign of James II., which the constitutional historian sees to have been full of peril to the civil, and eventually to the religious liberties of England, were nevertheless to the cruelly harried Nonconformists years of surcease of pain and recovery of freedom. The King's Declaration of Indulgence, published on April 4, 1687, expressed sentiments which, had there been no sinister design lurking behind them, would have done honour to Milton or Locke. "It is, and hath been of long time, our constant sense and opinion that conscience ought not to be constrained, nor people forced in matters of religion. It has ever been directly contrary to our inclination, as we think it is to the interest of Government, which it destroys by spoiling trades, depopulating countries, and discouraging strangers; and finally, it has never obtained the end for which it was employed. And in this we are the more confirmed by the reflections we have made upon the conduct of the last four reigns; for after all the frequent and pressing endeavours that

were used in each of them to reduce this kingdom to an exact conformity in religion, it is visible the success has not answered the design, and the difficulty is invincible." These words are true, whoever uttered them, and the Declaration of Indulgence, however unconstitutional, marked a victory won for the cause of Toleration, which no efforts of ecclesiastical bigotry have ever been able thoroughly to reverse.

In the early part of 1686, a year before the Declaration of Indulgence, there had been some relaxation of the severities practised upon Friends. Fox writes thus in the *Journal*—"I came back to London in the First Month (March), 1686, and set myself with all diligence to look after Friends' sufferings, from which we had now some hope of getting relief. The sessions came on in the Second Month (April), at Hicks's Hall, where many Friends had appeals to be tried; with whom I was from day to day, to advise and see that no opportunity were slipped, nor advantage lost, and they generally succeeded well. Soon after also, the King was pleased, upon our often laying our sufferings before him, to give order for the releasing of all prisoners for conscience' sake that were in his power to discharge, whereby the prison-doors were opened, and many hundreds of Friends, some of whom had been long in prison, were set at liberty. Some of them, who had for many years been restrained in bonds, came now up to the Yearly Meeting, which was in the Third Month (May) this year. This caused great joy to Friends, to see our ancient, faithful brethren again at liberty in the Lord's work, after their long confinement. And indeed a precious meeting we had, the refreshing presence of the Lord appearing plentifully with us and amongst us."

It was soon observed that the liberty granted to Nonconformists was shared (most justly according to our present views) by the Roman Catholics. "As it was a time of general liberty," says Fox, "the Papists appeared more open in their worship than formerly; and many unsettled people going to view them at it, a great talk there was of their praying to saints and by beads, etc., whereupon I wrote a short paper concerning prayer." The paper begins—

"Christ Jesus, when He taught His disciples to pray, said unto them, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, etc.' Christ doth not say that they should pray to Mary the mother of Christ; nor doth He say that they should pray to angels or to saints that are dead. Christ did not teach them to pray to the dead, nor for the dead; neither did Christ or His apostles teach the believers to pray by beads, nor to sing by outward organs, but the apostle said he would sing and pray by the Spirit, for the Spirit itself maketh intercession,' and the Lord that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the spirit."

Next year (May 1687), the Declaration of Indulgence having been issued, the result of the general toleration and liberty now granted was seen in a very large attendance of the Yearly Meeting. At the close of it, Fox addressed a very wise "Word of counsel and caution to Friends to walk circumspectly in this time of liberty." The Lord having been pleased to incline the King's heart towards them, to open the prison-doors and to stop the spoilers of their goods, he had an anxious desire "that none of them might abuse this liberty nor the mercies of the Lord, but prize them, for

there is great danger in time of liberty, of getting up into ease, looseness, and false liberty. And now," he continued, "seeing that ye have not the outward persecutors to war with in sufferings, with the spiritual weapons keep down that which would not be subject to Christ, that He, the Holy One, may reign in your hearts, that your lives, conversations, and words may preach righteousness and truth, that ye all may show forth good ensamples of true believers in Christ, in virtue and holiness, answering that which may be known of God in all people, that ye are the sons and daughters of God."

And now the time was drawing on for the great Revolution of 1688, the last cataclysm that has befallen the English State. The reader shall see just how much and how little mark it makes in Fox's *Journal*, and shall conjecture for himself what his secret feelings may have been concerning it.

(September 1688.) "I had not been long in London before a great weight came upon me, and the Lord gave me a sight of the great bustles and troubles, revolution and change, which soon after came to pass. In the sense whereof, and in the movings of the Spirit of the Lord, I wrote a general Epistle to Friends, to forewarn them of the approaching storm, that they might all retire to the Lord, in whom safety is. . . . About this time great exercise and weight came upon me (as had usually done before the great revolutions and changes of government), and my strength departed from me: so that I reeled and was ready to fall as I went along the streets. At length I could not go abroad at all, I was so weak for some time, till I felt the power of the Lord to spring over all, and had

received an assurance from Him that He would preserve His faithful people to Himself through all."

(March 5, 1689: the "Glorious Revolution" already accomplished: William III. at Whitehall, and James II. at St. Germains.) "It was now a time of much talk, and people busied their minds and spent their time too much in hearing and telling news. To show them the vanity thereof, and to draw them from it, I wrote the following lines:—'In the low region, in the airy life, all news is uncertain; there nothing is stable; but in the higher region, in the Kingdom of Christ, there all things are stable and sure, and the news always good and certain. For Christ, who hath all power in heaven and earth given unto Him, rules in the kingdoms of men. . . . His power is certain and changes not, by which He removes the mountains and hills, and shakes the heavens and the earth. Leaky, dishonourable vessels, the hills and mountains, and the old heavens and the earth, are all to be shaken and removed and broken to pieces, though they do not see it nor him that doeth it; but His elect and faithful both see it and know Him and His power, that cannot be shaken, and which changeth not.

"About the middle of the first month (March), 1689, I went to London, the Parliament then sitting, and engaged about the bill for Indulgence. Though I was weak in body and not well able to stir about, yet so great a concern was upon my spirit on behalf of Truth and Friends, that I attended continually for many days, with other Friends, at the Parliament house, labouring with the members that the thing might be done comprehensively and effectually."

The end of Fox's long labours "for the cause of

Truth" was now approaching. Through these later years, as has been said, his old energy had greatly abated, and he had seldom travelled more than twenty miles from London. Swarthmoor Hall was out of the question for him, with his enfeebled frame, racked by rheumatism and neuralgia, and actually it was his wife, though ten years older than he, and now seventy-six years of age, who made the long journey up from Lancashire in order to accomplish their last meeting. Their contemporaries, like modern readers, were evidently surprised that this faithful couple, strongly attached, as they certainly were, to one another, should have been willing to spend so much of their life apart. We will hear Margaret Fox's account of this last meeting, an account which bears somewhat of the character of an *Apologia* for their long separation.

"Though the Lord had provided an outward habitation for him [by his marriage], yet he was not willing to stay at it, because it was so remote and far from London, where his service most lay. And my concern for God and His holy eternal truth was then in the North, where God had placed and set me, and likewise for the ordering and governing of my children and family: so that we were very willing, both of us, to live apart for some years on God's account, and His truth's service, and to deny ourselves of that comfort which we might have had in being together, for the sake and service of the Lord and His truth. And if any took occasion, or judged hard of us because of that, the Lord will judge them: for we were innocent. And for my own part, I was willing to take many long journeys, for taking away all occasion of evil thoughts; and though I lived two hundred miles from London, yet have I

been nine times there upon the Lord and His truth's account; and of all the times that I was in London, this last was most comfortable, that the Lord was pleased to give me strength and ability to travel that great journey, being seventy-six years of age, to see my dear husband, who was better in his health and strength than many times I had seen him before. I look upon it that the Lord's special hand was in it that I should go then, for he lived but about half-a-year after I left him, which makes me admire the wisdom and goodness of God in ordering my journey at that time."

The last years and months of George Fox's life were busily occupied in writing Epistles to the Friends in various stations, to Friends in Barbadoes and America, to the persecuted congregation at Dantzic, to the magistrates of that city, and so forth. These documents suffer from that tendency to diffuseness which was characteristic both of the author and the age, and though they are full of beautiful Christian feeling, it cannot be said that the expositions of Scripture in which they abound are particularly luminous or helpful. But there are many grains of gold in the mass, expressions which come straight from the heart of the writer, and help one to understand the power which his spoken discourses had on the hearts of his hearers. In one of the years of persecution (1685) he comforted his suffering Friends, by speaking to them of Christ, "in whom the promises are Yea and Amen; who is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending—the Eternal Rest. So keep and walk in Christ, your rest, every one that hath received Him."

Into that Eternal Rest the struggling, toiling soul

was now to enter. On January 10, 1691, he wrote a letter to the Friends in Ireland, who had been suffering from the Civil War between James and William, waged in that country. The next day (Sunday) he went to the Friends' meeting at Gracechurch Street; no need now to meet in the courtyard, nor fear of constables coming to arrest the preacher. There he preached a long and powerful sermon, and the meeting ended, he went to the house of a Friend named Henry Goldney, in White Hart Court, near the meeting-house. "Some Friends going with him thither, he told them he thought he felt the cold strike to his heart as he came out of the meeting; 'yet,' he added, 'I am glad I was here. Now I am clear; I am fully clear.'"

He still complained of cold, "and his strength sensibly decaying, he was soon obliged to go into bed, where he lay in much contentment and peace, and very sensible to the last." "Divers Friends came to visit him in his illness, to some of whom he said, 'All is well: the Seed of God reigns over all, and over death itself. And though I am weak in body, yet the power of God is over all, and the Seed reigns over all disorderly spirits.'"

"Thus lying in a heavenly frame of mind, his spirit wholly exercised towards the Lord, he grew weaker in his natural strength, and on the third day of the week [Tuesday], between the hours of nine and ten in the evening, he quietly departed this life in peace, and sweetly fell asleep in the Lord, whose blessed truth he had livingly and powerfully preached in the meeting but two days before."

On the day appointed for the interment of George Fox, a very great concourse of Friends assembled at Gracechurch Street Meeting-house about noon. After

a solemn meeting, which lasted about two hours, the body was borne by Friends, accompanied by very great numbers, to the Friends' burial-ground near Bunhill Fields, "where after a solemn waiting upon the Lord, and several living testimonies borne, recommending the company to the guidance and protection of that Divine Spirit and power by which this holy man of God had been raised up, furnished, supported, and preserved to the end of his day, his body was committed to the earth; but his memorial shall remain and be everlastingly blessed among the righteous."

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

We have heard Fox's friends tell in their own simple language the story of his death and burial. From the *éloges* dedicated to his memory by his widow, his six step-daughters and their husbands, his friends William Penn and Thomas Ellwood, I will extract a few sentences which may help us to imagine the man as he appeared to his contemporaries.

Margaret Fox.—"It hath pleased Almighty God to take away my dear husband out of this evil, troublesome world, who was not a man thereof, being chosen out of it; who had his life and being in another region, and whose testimony was against the world, that the deeds thereof were evil, and therefore the world hated him. . . . .

"And now he hath finished his course and his testimony and is entered into his eternal rest and felicity. I trust in the same powerful God that His holy arm and power will carry me through, whatever He hath yet for me to do; and that He will be my strength and support and the bearer-up of my heart unto the end and in the end. For I know His faithfulness and goodness and I have experience of His love, to whom be glory and powerful dominion for ever. Amen."[1]

[1] Margaret Fox survived her second husband nearly twelve years, and died at Swarthmoor in her eighty-eighth year.

The six daughters and their husbands.—"Neither days nor length of time with us can wear out the memory of our dear and honoured father, George Fox, whom the Lord hath taken to Himself . . . . Though of no great literature nor seeming much learned, as to the outward (being hid from the wisdom of this world), yet he had the tongue of the learned and could speak a word in due season to the conditions and capacities of most, especially to them that were weary and wanted soul's rest, being deep in the divine mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

"And the word of life and salvation through him reached unto many souls, whereby many were convinced of their great duty of inward retiring to wait upon God; and as they became diligent in the performance of that service, were also raised up to be preachers of the same everlasting gospel of peace and glad tidings to others; who are as seals to his ministry both in this and other matters, and may possibly give a more full account thereof. Howbeit we, knowing his unwearied diligence, not sparing, but spending himself in the work and service whereunto he was chosen and called of God, could not but give this short testimony of his faithfulness therein, and likewise of his tender love and care towards us; who, as a tender father to his children, (in which capacity we stood, being so related to him,) never failed to give us his wholesome counsel and advice."

William Penn (himself, it is to be remembered, a courtier and something of a scholar).—"He was a man that God endued with a clear and wonderful depth, a discerner of others' spirits and very much a master of his own. And though the side of his understanding

which lay next to the world, and especially the expression of it, might sound uncouth and unfashionable to nice ears, his matter was nevertheless very profound, and would not only bear to be often considered, but the more it was so, the more weighty and instructive it appeared. And as abruptly and brokenly as sometimes his sentences would fall from him about divine things, it is well known they were often as texts to many fairer declarations. And indeed it showed beyond all contradiction that God sent him; that no art or part had any share in the matter or manner of his ministry, and that so many great, excellent, and necessary truths as he came forth to preach to mankind had therefore nothing of man's wit or wisdom to recommend them; so that as to man he was an original, being no man's copy.

"He had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things and show the mind, harmony, and fulfilling of them, with much plainness and to great comfort and edification.

"But above all he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behaviour, and the fewness and fulness of his words have often struck even strangers with admiration, as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer. And truly it was a testimony he knew [more] and lived nearer to the Lord than other men: for they that know Him most will see most reason to approach Him with reverence and fear.

"He was of an innocent life, no busy-body nor self-

seeker, neither touchy nor critical: what fell from him was very inoffensive if not very edifying.[1] So meek, contented, modest, easy, steady, tender, it was a pleasure to be in his company. He exercised no authority but over evil, and that everywhere and in all; but with love, compassion, and long-suffering. A most merciful man, as ready to forgive as unapt to give or take an offence. Thousands can truly say he was of an excellent spirit and savour among them, and because thereof the most excellent spirits loved him with an unfeigned and unfading love. . . . And truly I must say that though God had visibly clothed him with a divine presence and authority, and indeed his very presence expressed a religious majesty, yet he never abused it, but held his place in the Church of God with great meekness and a most engaging humility and moderation. . . . I write my knowledge and not report, and my witness is true, having been with him for weeks and months together on occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, and that by night and by day, by sea and by land, in this and in foreign countries; and I can say I never saw him out of his place or not a match for every service or occasion. For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yea, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man, a divine and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making. I have been surprised at his questions and answers in natural things: that whilst he was ignorant of useless and sophistical science, he had in him the foundation of useful and commendable knowledge and cherished it, everywhere. Civil, beyond all forms of breeding, in

[1] This looks like dispraise. I imagine that Penn means, "even when it was not very edifying."

his behaviour; very temperate, eating little and sleeping less, though a bulky person.

"Thus he lived and sojourned among us; and as he lived so he died: feeling the same eternal power that had raised and preserved him, in his last moments. So full of assurance was he that he triumphed over death, and so even in his spirit to the last, as if death were hardly worth notice or a mention."

Lastly, we may take a few words from *Thomas Ellwood*, the friend of Milton, the suggester of *Paradise Regained*, and the editor of George Fox's *Journal*.

"I knew him not till the year 1661; from that time to the time of his death I knew him well, conversed with him often, observed him much, loved him dearly and honoured him truly; and upon good experience I can say, he was indeed a heavenly-minded man, zealous for the name of the Lord, and preferred the honour of God before all things. He was valiant for the truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, unwearied in labouring in it, steady in his testimony to it, immovable as a rock. Deep he was in Divine knowledge, clear in opening heavenly mysteries, plain and powerful in preaching, fervent in prayer. He was richly endued with heavenly wisdom, quiet in discerning, sound in judgment, able and ready in giving, discreet in keeping counsel; a lover of righteousness, an encourager of virtue, justice, temperance, meekness, purity, chastity, modesty, humility, charity, and self-denial in all, both by word and example. Graceful he was in countenance, manly in personage, grave in gesture, courteous in conversation, weighty in communication, instructive in discourse, free from affectation in speech or carriage, a severe reprover of

hard and obstinate sinners; a mild and gentle admonisher of such as were tender and sensible of their failings; not apt to resent personal wrongs, easy to forgive injuries; but zealously earnest, where the honour of God, the prosperity of truth, the peace of the Church were concerned. Very tender, compassionate, and pitiful he was to all that were under any sort of affliction; full of brotherly love, full of fatherly care, for indeed the care of the churches of Christ was daily upon him, the prosperity and peace whereof he studiously sought."

I have thought it better to give these descriptions of Fox with some fulness, lest in condensing I should in any way alter the proportions of the picture. They of course are the work of loving friends and admiring followers, and are to be taken with all needful allowances on that score. But even so, I think it will be admitted that we have here the portrait not only of a strong, but of a lovable man. That keen and piercing eye of his was not always sparkling with indignation against hypocritical "professors"—it could also shed tears of sympathy with the sorrowful, and there was something in his face which little children loved.

To sum up in fewest possible words the impression made by his words and works upon one who studies them across the level of two centuries: he was a man of lion-like courage and adamantine strength of will, absolutely truthful, devoted to the fulfilment of what he believed to be his God-appointed mission, and without any of those side-long looks at worldly promotion and aggrandizement which many sincere leaders of Church parties have cast at intervals of their journey. The chief defect in Fox's character will perhaps be

best described in the words of Carlyle—"Cromwell found George Fox's enormous sacred self-confidence none of the least of his attainments." It is to be remembered that Fox preached the doctrine of Christian perfection as a thing of possible attainment in this life; nor is he any the less welcome as a teacher because he does not indulge in that cant of exaggerated self-condemnation which was one of the signs of degenerating Puritanism. Still it is difficult for a reader of the *Journal* not to feel that Fox is too confident of the absolute rightness of his own conduct, and the utter wickedness of all who oppose him. This is of course the usual note of the Prophet, and one of the things whereby he is most distinguished from the Philosopher, at least the true Philosopher. It is the spirit of Hosea rather than of Marcus Aurelius, and, paradoxical as it may sound, if Fox's education had been such as to give him a little less of the teaching of the Minor Prophets, and a little more—he probably had none—of the teaching of the best of the Greek philosophers, the result might have been a fuller manifestation of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

But the beauties or the blemishes of the man's individual character are not after all the chief point for consideration by the student of his career. He believed, and his whole life was moulded by the belief, that he had a message from God to deliver to mankind. The important question is, whether this was in any sense true, or whether it was a mere delusion. Different readers of this little book will no doubt answer that question differently. To some the question will seem to be negatived beforehand by the simple fact that Fox received no commission to preach from those

whom they regard as the successors of the Apostles. Others, perhaps a more numerous class, will consider that the mistakes and failings, the eccentricities, perhaps the symptoms of mental excitement which occasionally showed themselves in the earlier parts of his career, equally remove the question from the zone of rational discussion. But if we admit the existence of any Divine revelation whatever, it may be worth while to ask ourselves—and the question has a much wider reach than to the individual instance now before us—"Through what manner of men has the Being whom we must believe to be All-wise, as well as Almighty, generally spoken to mankind? Speaking now of the servants, not of the Son, have they as a rule been men fallible or infallible?" We know that Stephen in his dying speech made a strange blunder as to the burial-place of Jacob, that Peter at Antioch was guilty of base compliance with the Judaizing party: yet do we not in spite of these errors, intellectual and moral, rightly regard them as message-bearers from the Most High?

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